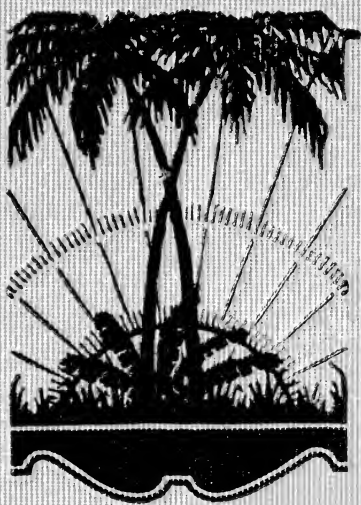


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KEITH-FALCONER
OF ARABIA
JAMES ROBSON



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ION KEITH-FALCONER

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ION KEITH-FALCONER OF ARABIA

BY

JAMES ROBSON, M.A.

SHEIKH OTHMAN



NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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NOTE BY GENERAL EDITOR

ION KEITH-FALCONER takes his place among Master Missionaries in virtue of the circumstances which marked his dedication to the work and the influence he exerted. Of noble birth and brilliant scholastic gifts, possessing wealth, a lover of sport and champion cyclist, he relinquished the certainty of a distinguished career in England to pioneer a mission amongst the Muslims of Southern Arabia. In his brief span of life there he accomplished little, but the work he initiated continues, and the inspiration of his character and example has been deep and wide-spread. It is a question whether such a record as is here presented by one who has the privilege of following in his footsteps is not better fitted to produce recruits for the mission field than biographies more charged with tales of successful achievement.

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CHAPTER I

A NOBLE LINEAGE

ION GRANT NEVILLE KEITH-FALCONER came of a family which can be traced back to the early Christian centuries. In the district of Hesse there was a tribe known as Catti, some of whom early migrated to Scotland, where their name changed to Kethi, then to Keycht, and finally to Keith. The founder of the family fortunes, according to the commonly accepted story, was Robert Keith, who took an important part in a battle at Barry against a host of Danish invaders in 1010, and was rewarded by Malcolm II with the title of heritable Great Marischal of Scotland and a grant of lands in East Lothian.

One of the most interesting events in the history of the family occurred in the year 1657, when Cromwell's troops were besieging Dunnottar Castle, where the

Regalia of Scotland were taken after the Battle of Dunbar. This castle was built on a rocky promontory near Stonehaven about 1380 by Sir William Keith, and for long was the chief seat of the family. Cromwell's men had come to Dunnottar with the intention of capturing the Regalia, but Mrs. Ogilvie, wife of the governor of the castle, formed a plan with the help of Mr. Grainger, parish minister of Kinneff, and his wife to convey them to safety. One day, when Mrs. Grainger was returning with her maid from Stonehaven where she had gone to buy flax, she received permission from the English commander outside Dunnottar Castle to visit Mrs. Ogilvie. When an entrance to the castle had been gained, the maid was sent away to speak to her friends, and the two ladies proceeded to hide the Regalia in the flax ; on leaving, the maid took up the burden, quite unaware of the valuable nature of its contents, and they passed safely through the English lines, the English general courteously helping Mrs. Grainger to mount her horse.

That night Mr. and Mrs. Grainger buried the Regalia under the pulpit in Kinneff church, and to remove suspicion, a letter supposed to be from Sir John Keith, fourth son of the sixth Earl Marischal, was allowed to come into the hands of the English troops at Dunnottar, saying that he had successfully reached France with the Regalia.

In 1677, after the Restoration, Sir John Keith was created Earl of Kintore, and assumed the motto '*Quae amissa salva*'—
'What were lost are safe.'

Before this time several members of the Keith family had taken an important part in the life of Scotland. Sir Robert Keith was in command of the Scottish cavalry at the Battle of Bannockburn, after which he received a grant of lands in Aberdeenshire. William, the fourth Earl, was a firm supporter of the Reformation, and fought at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547. In his time the fortunes of the family were at their height, for they had property in so many counties that it was said of the

Earl that 'he could travel from Berwick to the northern extremity of Scotland, eating every meal and sleeping every night upon his own estates.'

George, the fifth Earl, was in favour with James VI; it was he who was sent to Denmark to conduct the Princess Anne, James's betrothed bride, to Scotland. In 1609, after the Union of the Crowns, he was appointed Lord High Commissioner to represent the King in the Parliament of Scotland. In 1593 he founded the Marischal College at Aberdeen, 'where,' as Carlyle says, 'for a few, in those stern granite countries, the Diviner Pursuits are still possible (thank God and this Keith) on frugal oatmeal.'

Subsequent Earls were partisans of the Stuarts. Robert Burns said: 'My ancestors rented lands of the noble Keiths-Marischal, and had the honour of sharing their fate. I mention this because it threw my father on the world at large. They followed boldly where their leaders led, and welcomed ruin, and shook hands with

infamy, for what they believed to be the cause of their God and their king.' The name of the Burns family was at that time Burness, a common Kincardineshire name ; it was when they moved to Ayrshire that it changed to Burns. The family had rented land from the Keiths at Kinneff.

After the 1715 rising the tenth Earl fled with his brother James, who became the famous Marshal Keith, serving in the Spanish, Russian and Prussian armies. He was killed in battle at Hochkirchen, where he was buried, but his remains were afterwards removed to Berlin, where they were interred with honour.

In 1759 the Earl Marischal was pardoned and permitted to return to Scotland, but he did not stay there long. He returned to Prussia, where he died in 1778, and with him the title of Marischal became extinct.

The second Earl of Kintore had two sons and a daughter, but the sons died without issue. The daughter, Lady Catherine, married the fifth Lord Falconer of Haulkerton, and on the death of the Earl Marischal

in 1778 her grandson became the fifth Earl of Kintore. Keith-Falconer's surname is thus derived from the union of the families of Keith and Falconer.

The fifth Earl of Kintore is said to have been somewhat eccentric, his chief eccentricity being the shooting of every bird he saw, even including the fowl of his tenants ; but he always paid them for any of their fowl that he had shot. The story goes that one Sunday, when the people were in church, a bird began to fly about one of the windows, and then came right inside and flew round the minister's head. This was too much of a temptation to the Earl, so he pulled out a pistol and, to the consternation of minister and congregation, shot the bird. When the people remonstrated with him afterwards, he said that it was the only thing he could do, for the bird was annoying the minister.

Ion Keith-Falconer was the third son of the eighth Earl of Kintore, who was a prominent elder of the Free Church of Scotland, and was deeply devoted to the

furtherance of God's Kingdom both at home and abroad. His ancestors had fought and died for earthly kingdoms ; but his heart was set on one that is higher and more enduring.

Ion Keith-Falconer thus entered into a great heritage. He had in his veins the blood of heroic men : he had also the still greater gift of godly parents.

CHAPTER II

CHILDHOOD, SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

ION KEITH-FALCONER was born at Edinburgh on the 5th of July 1856, and his early years were mainly spent at the family seat of Keith Hall, near Inverurie, in Aberdeenshire. During those years he showed some of the characteristics which, both in his youth and in his manhood, made him so attractive. He was so fond of helping others that at home he went by the name of the 'angel.'

When he was only seven years of age, he began to pay visits to the cottagers in their homes and read the Bible to them, astonishing them by his power of interpreting Scripture at such an early age. These visits were made on his own initiative, and, indeed, he did not even tell his family that he was making them ; it was only when the cottagers themselves told

how he had been visiting them that his people discovered what he was doing. He could thus early do good without any desire for praise.

He was naturally generous. One day, on the way home from Inverurie, where he had gone to buy himself some ginger-nuts—a favourite luxury of his—he met a boy who looked poor and hungry, and feeling that this boy had more need of the ginger-nuts than he, without hesitation he handed them over to him. Nor was this an isolated example of his generosity. He frequently gave his pocket-money to poor people whom he met ; and when he had no more money, he would save up biscuits to give away. Whenever anything was to be shared among the children, he was always so anxious for his brothers and sisters to get their share that he held back, insisting that the others should come first.

To some this trait of character may appear to be most unnatural, so that they may be tempted to wonder whether he was

a normal, healthy child ; but there was no priggishness about him. He enjoyed the games and the amusements of childhood like any other child, and when he was older there was no one with whom the younger children of the family preferred to play more than with him.

For two years he and his elder brother, Dudley, were educated by a private tutor. Then as always he was deeply interested in religious matters, concerning which his tutor said :—

‘During the many walks and rambles that we had together he would often say to me, “I wish you would talk to me,” which I knew meant to say, Will you speak to me of the Saviour and of the incidents in the life of the Lord Jesus? . . . He was a thoroughly conscientious and noble-hearted boy.’

At the age of eleven he was sent to the preparatory school of Cheam, near Epsom, and in 1869, when he was thirteen, he was successful in obtaining an entrance scholarship to Harrow. Mr. Watson, in whose

House he lived at Harrow, gives an interesting account of their first meeting, when one of the masters at Cheam took Keith-Falconer to Harrow for the scholarship examinations held at the beginning of the Easter holidays. He says :—

‘ Ion then and there informed me that he was coming to be a boarder in my House, and did not seem disconcerted when I assured him that there must be some mistake, as no previous communication on the subject had been made to me. Eventually we came to a compromise. I was greatly attracted by the open guileless face of my young visitor, and I promised that if he obtained a scholarship I would find a place for him. He was duly elected a scholar ; and thus it happened that I had the happiness of seeing and watching him through his too short, but always blameless and distinguished career at Harrow.’

During his first three years at Harrow he was in the classical side ; but at the

beginning of his fourth year he was transferred to the modern side, as he had shown a desire to pay more attention to the study of Mathematics, French, and German. He was one of the best boys at school, although he did not show there the brilliancy that he attained later when he had discovered his bent at Cambridge. His chief distinctions at Harrow were the Ebrington Prize for German, the Flower Prize for German Prose, and the prize for problems, all of which were gained in 1873.

He had, like other boys, a healthy pleasure in winning prizes, but it was not the thought of a prize that made him work, as is shown by his fondness for shorthand. At Harrow his interest in this subject began, and he pursued his study of it with great energy. He would spend time copying out shorthand notes when other boys were occupying themselves with the subjects which at school are conventionally called 'work.' Although some of these boys might be getting ahead

of him, he would go on with his shorthand if he had a mind to do it. It was not idleness that kept him from taking the foremost place at school, for he was constantly busy ; but his occupation was not always such as reaps a reward in class prizes.

He did not take any outstanding place in athletics. He made no name for himself at all in any of the recognised games or sports of the school ; but while at Harrow he began to take an interest in bicycling, which was then coming into fashion. In this he was to become a champion, as will be seen later.

The influence of his Christian upbringing at home was shown during his years at Harrow. He was by no means a prig, but he always stood out for those things which were good and pure, and was not afraid to own his allegiance to his Lord. His house-master said of him : ‘ I remember how, when almost head of my House, he displayed conspicuously on the wall of his room a printed roll of texts from the

Bible—an open avowal of his belief.' This is not an easy thing for a boy to do ; but he was simple and straightforward, and so concealed nothing that was of value to him.

It appears, too, that he had some very definite views, even at this stage, on the subject of Church government. On one occasion, when some of the other boys of his age were preparing for confirmation, he alarmed his tutor by telling him that he objected on principle to episcopal rites, and that his heart was with the Free Church of Scotland, of which he intended to become a member.

An important element in his character was his fondness for humour and fun. Mr. G. W. E. Russell says :—

' I have never known a human being who more intensely loved a joke. My first sight of him was at a supper party, and after supper there was speech-making of the festive and humorous character befitting such an occasion. Even now I fancy that I can see Keith-Falconer leaning back on

his chair, as he abandoned himself with childlike wholeheartedness to the wholesome fun of a happy after-supper speech. And so all through our intercourse, whatever tickled his sense of humour overcame him utterly. Laughter was a sort of intoxication to him.

‘ But be it borne in mind that this spirit of humour was never marred by the slightest touch of what was profane or unclean or unkind. At a wicked joke he could not have laughed, and for the best of reasons—it would have been no joke to him. “ Called and chosen and faithful ” might well have been his motto.’

At the end of the summer term of 1873 he left Harrow, and in October of that year he went along with three others to stay with the Rev. Lewis Hensley, vicar of Hitchin, for a year of study before entering Cambridge University. They made a practice of devoting six hours a day to study, Keith-Falconer working exclusively at mathematics.

In a letter to his sister-in-law he gives

the following description of his surroundings: 'The vicarage is just between the Market-Place or the town-square, and the church railings. My window, at which I am now sitting, looks out on a sort of walk which runs halfway round the church, and which is the resort of all the little boys in the neighbourhood; so that I hear nothing all day but "O 'ave you seen the Shah!" varied by a continual ringing of the church bells. Then there is the church clock which strikes lustily every quarter of an hour, giving forth 636 strokes per diem, which is a great excitement for us in this little place.'

While he was at Hitchin he kept up his interest in shorthand and bicycling. He was always ready to expatiate on the advantages of shorthand, and he went out regularly for runs on his bicycle, preparing himself for the feats that he was afterwards to accomplish. Another hobby to which he devoted himself was the Tonic Sol-Fa system. He would rise at seven to take lessons; or he would be heard by

the other members of the household practising in bed at that early hour.

He also took his share in religious work. He was interested in a Temperance Brigade of young men, helping in their entertainments and giving addresses. On Sunday afternoons he frequently held a meeting for poor people, either in the open air or in a schoolroom, and he also made a practice of visiting the poor and the sick, singing to them, speaking to them on religious subjects, and helping those who were in need with his money.

In November 1873, when he was at Hitchin, his elder brother, Dudley, died. They had always been the closest of friends, in their childhood being constant companions, but Dudley had not been able to go to a public school on account of his weak health. Latterly he was taken to Cannes in the hope that a more genial climate would help him ; but, although he had at first shown signs of improvement, his trouble increased, and he died in November. This was the first break in

the family circle, and it was a great loss to Ion.

² In October 1874 Keith-Falconer entered Trinity College, Cambridge. He did not reside in College, but had rooms on the north side of the Market Square. The noise and bustle of such a district would normally make it most unsuitable for a student, but he enjoyed it. When he was at Hitchin he seems to have appreciated the songs of the boys outside and the ringing of the bells. He had such powers of concentration that, when he was studying, no noise was able to distract him. He enjoyed the situation of his rooms at Cambridge, and at times, when he was resting from his study, he took a great interest in watching the people going busily about their work.

At the beginning of his course he intended to read for Honours in the Mathematical Tripos, and accordingly his first session was devoted to this subject; but his heart was not altogether in the work, and in his second year he changed and

began to read for Honours in the Theological Tripos. This change was not made because he had found himself unable for the studies which he had undertaken : it was wholly due to the fact that he did not have a real interest in them. He had been quite successful in his first year's work, for he had obtained a First Class, and was a prizeman : but he was not satisfied, so he decided to adopt the unusual course of changing his subject of study. It was a wise decision, for it enabled him to devote himself to a line of study that he could take up with his whole heart, and in which he was to prove himself notably successful.

An incident which occurred before his first examination at Cambridge shows how his honesty and his kindliness were combined in an unusual manner. A student wrote to him telling him that he had discovered that they were to sit near one another during the examination, and expressing the hope that Keith-Falconer would give him some help. The help

offered was not such as was desired : Keith-Falconer replied that he could not help him during the examination, but that he would be glad to spend all the remaining time 'coaching' him for it. The other man did not accept this unusually kind offer, and failed in the examination.

The maximum number of papers set for the Theological Tripos was fifteen, of which six were necessary to pass. The fifteenth was a special paper for the Hebrew prize. With characteristic thoroughness Keith-Falconer prepared himself for the whole fifteen—a heavy programme of work, which might well have occupied all his time ; yet in the course of it he sat an examination for proficiency in the Greek of the Septuagint, and was successful in gaining one of the prizes. In addition to this, he was a prizeman at the annual College examinations in June 1876 and 1877. The Tripos examination was held in January 1878. His hard work had had its effect on his general fitness, and

he was in need of rest ; then, in December 1877, the month before his examination, his younger brother died. This was a great blow to him ; but he went forward to his examination, and was one of the six whose names appeared in the first class. He was also awarded the Hebrew prize, and on the Saturday after the announcement of the result he graduated B.A.

He spent his time till the following October in a more leisurely fashion, and then set out to undertake more serious study. He began to work for the Tyrwhitt University Hebrew Scholarships, the examination for which was to be held in May 1879 ; and also for the Semitic Languages Tripos to be held in February 1880. When the time came, he was elected a Tyrwhitt scholar, and in the following year he was placed in the first class in the Semitic Languages Tripos. This latter examination had introduced him to the study of Arabic, the language that he was to use later in the missionary work that lay before him.

This account of his University successes has been short, but behind it lies concealed an immense amount of work, which was not only undertaken with enthusiasm : it was eminently successful, as is shown by the results.

His clear-headedness was one of his greatest qualifications as a student. Mr. E. E. Bowen, master of the Modern Side at Harrow, brings this out well. He says of him :—

‘ I never knew any one so clear-headed, I had almost said so candid, about what he knew. The way in which he could state an unsolved difficulty seemed almost as good as a solution of it. . . . I remember writing to him once to ask about the method and time of the adoption of the Western Aramaic among the Hebrews. There are many scholars who could have answered the question ; but I am afraid some would have left the questioner at the end much where they found him. Keith-Falconer’s reply, on a couple of sheets of notepaper, was a model of simple

and clear-headed statement ; it said just what was wanted, and told it without any display of learning or attempt at style. I think this clear-headedness in matters of intellect was after all only a reflection of the moral simplicity which was his highest and most beautiful gift.'

CHAPTER III

A CHAMPION CYCLIST

KEITH-FALCONER was not only a brilliant student, he was also a remarkably fine cyclist. He had made a name for himself in this respect before he went to Cambridge. So great was his ability that he received the unusual honour of being elected Vice-President of the Cambridge University Bicycle Club several months before he went up to College, and he justified this honour by winning his first race at Cambridge in the November of his first year. It was the ten-mile race, which he did in 34 minutes, the fastest time, amateur or professional, then on record. Three years later he beat this record by 1 minute 35 seconds.

The day following this race he gave an exhibition of riding on an 86-inch bicycle to Trumpington and back. He describes the bicycle thus: 'There is a little scale of steps up it, up which I am helped, and

then started off and left to myself. It is great fun riding this leviathan : it creates such an extraordinary sensation among the old dons who happen to be passing. If I fell off it, I should probably break an arm or a leg—so I shan't repeat the performance after to-day.'

Keith-Falconer had the build of an athlete. He was six feet three inches in height, and was broad in proportion. Mr. G. W. E. Russell gives the following description of his appearance :—

' . . . Ion Keith-Falconer was a very fine creature physically. The look of delicacy which he had worn in earlier years completely disappeared. He was extremely tall, but in no sense overgrown, for his chest and limbs developed in harmony with his height, and he gave abundant promise of being—what he became—a magnificently formed man. At the same time he kept a girl's delicacy of complexion, and even now I can see the rapid change of colour on his

Reddening face,
Beneath its garniture of curly gold.'

His sincerity is brought out in an interesting manner in the following incident. In January 1875 he was to run a race at Lillie Bridge, and had gone to stay for a few days with his opponent ; while there, he took him, his mother, and his aunt to Spurgeon's. From his reference to this occasion it is evident that this was a new experience to them. Many a man would have hesitated about venturing to do such a thing. Not so Keith-Falconer. To him it was the most natural thing in the world.

During his University course he won many bicycle races and made several records. In May 1875 he won a fifty-mile race for Cambridge against Oxford, the race being run from St. Albans to Oxford. In April 1876 he won the Amateur Championship Four-Mile Race at Lillie Bridge in the fastest time then on record. On 1st May 1877 he was elected President of the London Bicycle Club, and was annually re-elected President for nine years, till he resigned before leaving England for the last time.

In 1877, in the Inter-University races at Oxford, he rode the two-mile race in 6 minutes 1 second, the ten-mile race in 32 minutes 25 seconds, and the twenty-five-mile race in 1 hour 30 minutes 25 seconds, all of which were at that time the amateur records. On 11th May 1878, in the two-mile race of the National Cyclists' Union, he gained the title of 'Short-Distance Champion,' and in October of that year he won a five-mile race open to amateurs and professionals, beating John Keen, the professional champion, by five yards. Keen was a man for whom Keith-Falconer had a great admiration, saying of him that his soul was above prizes, and that he was a man whom one should be proud to call a friend. This victory over Keen is all the more notable because Keith-Falconer had forgotten everything about the race until he was reminded of it nine days before it was to be run. In a letter to Sir (then Mr.) Isaac Pitman, he describes how he trained during those nine days :—

‘ I immediately began to make my

preparations and to train hard. The first great thing was to knock off smoking, which I did. Next, to rise early in the morning, and breathe the fresh air before breakfast, which I did ; next, to go to bed not later than ten, which I did ; next, to eat wholesome food and not too much meat or pastry, which I did ; and finally, to take plenty of gentle exercise in the open air, which I did.

‘ What was the result ? I met Keen on Wednesday last, the 23rd October, and amidst the most deafening applause, or rather yells of delight, this David slew the great Goliath : to speak in plain language, I defeated Keen by about 5 yards.

‘ The time was by far the fastest on record.

			min.	sec.
‘ The	1st mile	was done in	2	59
„	2nd	„ „	3	1
„	3rd	„ „	3	7
„	4th	„ „	3	12
„	5th	„ „	2	52 $\frac{2}{5}$
Total time			<u>15</u>	<u>11$\frac{2}{5}$</u>

‘The last lap, that is, the last circuit, measuring 440 yards, we did in 39 seconds, that is more than 11 yards per second.’

He says further:—‘ . . . When the race was going on, I thought actually that we were going slowly and that the time would be bad, and the reason was, I was in such beautiful condition. I did not perspire or “blow” from beginning to end.’ And that after only nine days’ training!

In the following May he defeated John Keen in a two-mile race by three inches. The time was 5 minutes $36\frac{3}{5}$ seconds, a record not beaten for several years. Three days later he made a record for the twenty-mile race, winning it by sixteen yards in 1 hour 4 minutes $15\frac{3}{5}$ seconds. He had a wonderful power of making a final spurt, in which his opponents were left behind. In this twenty-mile race all the competitors but Keith-Falconer and another had fallen out. He contented himself by keeping behind the other till the last

two hundred yards; then came an astonishing spurt, and he won easily. What makes these races all the more remarkable is that in the preceding week he had sat the examination for the Tyrwhitt Scholarships, an examination which lasted four days, with six hours' examination each day. A man who could break records within a few days after such an ordeal was no ordinary man.

On 29th July 1882 he won his last race of any importance. It was the fifty-mile Bicycle Union Amateur Championship at the Crystal Palace. His time was 2 hours 43 minutes $58\frac{3}{4}$ seconds. This time not only gave him the title of Amateur Champion: it beat by seven minutes all previous records.

One of his great bicycling feats was the run from Land's End to John o' Groat's, which he had had in mind for some time. It was first suggested to him by Mr. E. E. Bowen, master of the Modern Side at Harrow. When Keith-Falconer was

at Cambridge Mr. Bowen advised him to do two things. The first was to edit some book that fell within the line of his reading: the second was to perform some bicycling feat that would be a pleasure to him to look back upon in the future. After some discussion it was decided to attempt to go from Land's End to John o' Groat's in a fortnight. In June 1881 he set out for Penzance with a view to starting off on this undertaking, and waited there several days; but the weather was so bad that he was compelled to postpone the run.

In the following June he accomplished his purpose. He left Land's End at 4.5 A.M. on Monday, 5th June and arrived at John o' Groat's at 3.20 A.M. on the 18th. The route which he followed was a distance of 994 miles, which he covered in 13 days less 45 minutes—an average of 76 to 77 miles a day. He sent off post-cards and telegrams to friends from various places on the route. None were more

enthusiastic about his run than the boys at Harrow. Mr. Bowen hung up a large map in the class-room, and by means of a red flag noted the progress made each day. Keith-Falconer kept Mr. Bowen well informed, as two or three times a day he sent him a post-card or a telegram. A few weeks after the run he paid a visit to Harrow and gave the boys an informal lecture on it.

He wrote a detailed account of the journey, which appeared in an Aberdeen paper and in the London *Bicycle Club Gazette*. A sentence in that account helps one to realise what progress has been made in recent times in the way of rendering travelling by road safer. In speaking of the top of the ascent of the Mendip Hills he says: 'At the summit of the steepest part the Bicycle Union has placed one of its boards, inscribed "To cyclists: this hill is dangerous."' Nowadays such signs are generally rusty and half obliterated. They have been supplanted by bright-coloured

signs of various tints and shapes, which give all the information one could desire with regard to dangerous hills and nasty corners. The modern cyclist or motorist takes them for granted, and does not consider them worthy of mention. Keith-Falconer, however, was at the beginning of things, when such a notice was unusual enough to deserve comment.

He tells how, on the third day, he 'became the victim of stupidity, then of malice.' He says: 'A waggoner seeing me about to overtake him pulled very suddenly to the wrong side, and sent me sprawling over a heap of flints. No harm done. Shortly after, a wilful misdirection given me by a playful Somertonian sent me two and a half miles in the wrong direction, so that I traversed twelve instead of seven miles between Somerton and Glastonbury.'

When he reached Morpeth his right foot began to pain him, but he kept manfully on. Two days later, when, on account of

a strong north-west wind, he had to walk practically all the way from Falkirk to Dunblane, his foot fortunately did not trouble him. The following day, however, when he was crossing the Grampians, he suffered such pain that at Dalnacardoch he was obliged to invade a farmhouse and ask for rest and food. The route which he took in going north was somewhat circuitous. From Dunblane he went to Perth via Crieff, and thence on to Dunkeld. Nowadays one would more naturally go direct to Perth, or, if Crieff were to be included in the run, the quickest way would be to go on to Dunkeld by way of Amulree. When Keith-Falconer rose on the thirteenth day his foot was very stiff and painful, but he went on. He had spent the night at Tain, and had still one hundred and ten miles to go. He might quite well have divided this distance into two stages, as he had originally proposed to do the journey within a fortnight, but he decided to run all the way to John o' Groat's before stopping to rest. In the

last two days he covered two hundred and fifteen miles. His whole performance was a wonderful feat of endurance. In spite of much rain, contrary winds, and a sore foot, he accomplished the distance actually in less time than he had originally proposed.

Mr. Bowen says that for two or more years 'he was certainly the best bicyclist in England.' His records have since been beaten, and his run from Land's End to John o' Groat's has been surpassed by cyclists who have taken shorter routes and have had the advantage of more modern bicycles. Modern bicycling records are considerably better than those which Keith-Falconer made, being actually more than twice as fast as his; and the run from Land's End to John o' Groat's has been done in three days and a few hours; but one must take into account the following facts. It was not till 1885 that the first bicycle with both wheels of equal diameter was invented. This was the Starley 'Rover,' which was driven by a chain

over the gear wheel. In 1888 the invention of pneumatic tyres revolutionised bicycling, and made possible speeds that had never been dreamt of before. In his day, Keith-Falconer was able to beat his opponents, amateur and professional alike; the speeds which he recorded in a period long before the advent of all the modern refinements of the bicycle were no mean achievement.

This chapter may be closed fittingly by a quotation from a letter which Keith-Falconer wrote in July 1881, as it shows the attitude which he adopted towards sport. He says: 'It is an excellent thing to encourage an innocent sport (such as bicycling) which keeps young fellows out of the public-houses, music-halls, gambling-hells, and all the other traps that are ready to catch them. . . . If we exercised and trained our bodies more than we do, there would be less illness, bad temper, nervousness and self-indulgence, more vigour and simplicity of life. Of course, you can have too much of it, but the tendency in

most cases is to indulge the body, and not exercise it enough, and athletic contests are an excellent means of inducing young people to deny themselves in this respect.'

CHAPTER IV

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

IN addition to his studies and his bicycling, Keith-Falconer took a great interest in home mission work. He was associated with such work in Cambridge in the district of Barnwell, which had originally been a small village ; but its population had grown rapidly, with the result that the existing churches were insufficient to supply the religious needs of the people. A rough element had entered this district, so that the need for religious effort of some kind had become all the greater.

In Barnwell there was a theatre known as the Theatre Royal, which was not so valuable to its owner as it might have been, because of restrictions put upon the performance of plays. The Vice-Chancellor of the University had the final word in the matter. No plays could be performed

without his permission, and he refused to give permission except during vacation. In May 1875 it was decided to hire this theatre for a month to conduct evangelistic services in it in preparation for a visit of D. L. Moody. He was prevented from paying the visit, but in spite of this the theatre was hired and services were held there with great success. That made it clear that a good work might be done in this district, so it was decided to carry on evangelistic services regularly. Accordingly, for three and a half years mission services were held at a Ragged School in New Street. Keith-Falconer took a great interest in this work, and occasionally spoke at the meetings.

In the autumn of 1878 it was learned that the owner of the Theatre Royal intended to sell it, and those who were engaged in the mission work decided to buy it if it could be got for a price not exceeding £1200. Keith-Falconer felt that it was sure to fetch a higher price than this, and therefore persuaded his friends

to bid to the extent of £1650. It was, however, sold to a higher bidder at £1875 ; but when this gentleman heard of the desire of the mission workers to buy the theatre he very generously offered to give it to them for £1650, and to treat the extra £225 which he had paid as a donation to the mission. Keith-Falconer took an active share in raising the sum required, giving liberally himself, and persuading relatives and friends outside Cambridge to subscribe. The money was soon raised, and the theatre was opened as a mission hall on 18th November.

On the opening night every available seat was occupied. Keith-Falconer was one of the speakers, his speech being peculiarly happy and effective. He took the subject of Acting as his text. Actors, he said, were accustomed to transformation scenes, but they had a novel one that night. One point of the transformation scene was that the theatre was now open free to all, just like the Gospel itself. An actor who had been acting in that theatre

in the summer, had made a speech on his benefit night in which he had said that the poor players who had tried for so long to raise the tone and purify the morals of Barnwell were to be supplanted by a company of religious hypocrites. He had said: 'Acting has not ceased in this place: there will be acting still.' Keith-Falconer declared that this statement was truer than the actor had imagined. There was going to be some grand acting, in which lives would be changed and ennobled. All life was a drama, and we had to see that we performed our parts as best we could.

Keith-Falconer kept up his interest in this work all the time he was at Cambridge, and even later, when he had gone to Aden. He attended the meetings regularly, but did not speak often; it was not his habit to push himself forward as a speaker.

Another branch of home mission work in which he was keenly interested was the Tower Hamlets Mission in the Mile-End Road, London. This work was started and is still being carried on by Mr. F. N.

Charrington, who first met Keith-Falconer when he visited Keith Hall during a walking tour. When Mr. Charrington was a young man he was faced with a problem that few would have the courage to meet. His father was one of the partners in the brewery firm of Messrs. Charrington and Head, and it was only natural that Mr. F. N. Charrington, his oldest son, should take his share in the business. But one day, outside a public-house owned by his firm, he saw a man knocking his wife into the gutter, which made him feel that by becoming a partner he would be responsible for such scenes. In thinking over that sight he said to himself: 'Well, you have knocked your poor wife down, and with the same blow you have knocked me out of the brewery business.' He refused to accept the position waiting for him, thus sacrificing, as his biographer says, a sum of a million and a quarter pounds.

At first he had helped in a night school held in a hayloft over a stable; soon a schoolroom was taken; then a boys' home

was started. One of the results of this work was that a gang of young thieves was broken up, because several of its members, including the leader, had been influenced for good. In 1872 the East-End Conference Hall was opened, a building capable of holding over six hundred, and work was carried on there until it became too small for all that was being done. The next move was to the Mile-End Road, where a tent was erected on a large piece of ground which had previously been used as a showground, and services were held in that tent every night for two summers. Then a better site was obtained at the broadest part of the Mile-End Road, and the largest tent available was set up. It was superseded later by the first great Assembly Hall, capable of holding about two thousand. This was a temporary building of corrugated iron, and was open every night of the week, with an attendance of over six hundred on week-nights. On Sunday nights many had to be turned away, so large were the numbers who came.

Since the work at the Assembly Hall, great as it was, did not cover all that might be done, it was supplemented by evangelistic services in music-halls. Every means possible was used to raise the people, and to give them pure and healthy interests. Mr. Charrington and Keith-Falconer even went the length of speaking to people who were entering music-halls or public-houses and trying to dissuade them. This aroused great resentment, and on one occasion Mr. Charrington was arrested. A friend described the scene thus :—

‘ I shall never forget the night when Mr. Charrington was taken off by the police falsely accused of disturbance outside Lusby’s Music Hall. . . . In the dark I could see one tall man, standing in the centre, head and shoulders above every one else, and perfectly white: this was Keith-Falconer, who had been covered with flour by the frequenters of the music-hall.’

Keith-Falconer was to have run in the University Champion Bicycle Race, but

he put it off in order to give evidence, sending the following telegram to the course: 'The race is safe with Dodds. I have made up my mind not to run, having started in the race spoken of in Hebrews, chap. xii., verses 1, 2.'

Another form of work in which Keith-Falconer was interested was the display of Scripture texts and religious appeals in public places. Of this work he wrote:—

'We have several of these stations in the East of London, around which numbers of people may often be seen reading the Words of Life. On Sunday mornings, working men out for their weekly stroll stop to read the parable of the Prodigal Son, or the story of "The Patchwork Quilt." In the dead of night the poor fallen girl, as she passes along, is startled to see the familiar text she learned as a child in the Sunday School; the policeman, who walks along his solitary beat, turns his bull's eye lantern and, while all is hushed around him, reads the story of a Saviour's love; and the profligate, as he

returns from some scene of revelry, is arrested for the moment as he reads the solemn words, "Prepare to meet thy God." The result of this work has been that large numbers of people have been brought to hear the Gospel.'

The winter of 1879 was very severe. During that time the workers in the mission helped greatly to feed those who were in want. Keith-Falconer tells how multitudes were literally starving. Employment was scarce. 'Hundreds of men were waiting daily at the Docks in the hope (nearly always a disappointed hope) of a job.' The result was starvation. 'Starving men were found in several instances eating muddy orange peel picked off the road.' The work that was being done by the mission aroused great interest, and was made public by means of correspondence in some of the daily papers; many came to see what was being done, and helped liberally with donations, so that during a period of over six weeks twenty thousand meals were given, and over three hundred

families were helped every week in their houses.

In addition to the special help given at this period, Keith-Falconer was accustomed to do what he could to help needy cases. He preferred assisting individuals to speaking at meetings, and there were many who were indebted to him for help in time of distress. His pecuniary gift was always accompanied by a word of spiritual comfort and encouragement. In Cambridge too he gave generous help to those who were in need. It was always useful help. He obtained situations for some ; he aided a man who had come down in the world to emigrate ; and in many ways he aided others. His landlady said that he frequently brought people to his rooms, and gave them food, clothing, or money before they left. In the words of a friend, ' he never seemed to be able to come anywhere without trying to do good to somebody.'

During the time he was at Cambridge he made frequent visits to the Tower

Hamlets Mission, his custom being to spend a week at a time in London and help in the work of the mission. He was beloved by very many whom he aided there. A striking testimony to his influence and attractiveness is in the fact that there was a cabman in Whitechapel who was always anxious to drive him anywhere in London for nothing.

He took an active share in the efforts made to replace the Assembly Hall by a permanent building. The ultimate cost, including the site, was over £40,000. Keith-Falconer wrote a pamphlet on the proposed new hall, which described the needs in a remarkably clear and succinct manner. It was a model appeal for funds. It told clearly what was required, giving reasons for everything, and described the principles on which the work was based. He not only appealed for funds: he also gave liberally himself, his own donations amounting to £2000.

The building was opened on Mr. Charrington's birthday, 4th February, 1886,

when Keith-Falconer was in Aden. It was a large hall, which could hold four thousand three hundred comfortably. One novel feature had been adopted on the suggestion of Keith-Falconer. He held that people on the street should be able to see the speakers on the platform, for he had the idea that many were kept from entering a mission hall because of obstacles which they imagined to exist inside. So the hall had glass doors through which passers-by could see all that was being done.

Writing from Aden on 24th February 1886, Keith-Falconer said: 'Very glad to hear from M. that Charrington's hall is such a success as a building. I knew it would be. He deserves great credit for pulling this grand scheme through.' Not a word about the credit which he himself deserved for helping Mr. Charrington so ably and generously to pull it through! Instead of that, he expressed regret that he was unable to do more, because he would require to spend about

£1000 soon on the buildings which he hoped to erect at Sheikh Othman.

Keith-Falconer lived a very full and a very useful life. Every one of his faculties was developed to the best purpose. In the realms of learning and of sport he proved himself a master. In addition to these powers he had the advantages of wealth and position. All these things he laid on the altar of God, and devoted them gladly to His service. Physically, mentally and spiritually he was a true man.

CHAPTER V

STUDIES IN GERMANY AND EGYPT

IN the work done for the Semitic Languages Tripos Keith-Falconer had made the acquaintance of Arabic, but he had only learned enough to enable him to do the paper on Comparative Grammar. When his examination was over he proceeded to study Arabic seriously. In this he had the advantage of the guidance of that great scholar, Dr. Wright, at Cambridge, with whom he read till the end of May ; and in October of that year he went to Leipzig to further his Arabic studies. He proposed in this way to improve his knowledge of German while going on with the study of Arabic ; and also to gain experience of University life of a different kind from that to which he had been accustomed. A friend who also was studying Arabic accompanied him to Leipzig, where

they found rooms and settled down to work. With his usual consideration for others, Keith-Falconer saw to it that rooms were obtained for his friend before he looked for rooms for himself. Some of his descriptions of his experiences in Leipzig are both interesting and amusing. This is what he said of two of the professors whose lectures he attended :—

‘ X. is not like some German professors, for he is tidy, without spectacles, nicely dressed, polite and affable, moderate in his views, and does not smoke. . . . Y. does wear spectacles, talks in a loud, rough voice, interlards his every lecture with frequent exclamations of “ Du lieber Gott,” “ Ach Gott,” and smokes like a chimney. But still he is tidy, and keeps his hair short. But he and X. are really very kind and good-hearted to a degree.

‘ Y.’s lectures—twice a week from October to March—cost me the moderate sum of 9s. 6d. But I have almost entirely ceased to attend them. I first went to them to learn some Arabic, afterwards I

continued to attend them to learn some German, and now I cease going at all because I can learn neither.'

Although he speaks thus lightly of his professors and of his attendance at their lectures, he did a good amount of useful work, and succeeded in giving himself a fair grounding in Arabic. Among the people whom he met, the one who impressed him most was Dr. Delitzsch, whose translation of the New Testament into Hebrew is printed, and sold among Jews by the British and Foreign Bible Society. He wrote of him that he was 'highly esteemed and beloved in the town and university,' and that he was 'by far the greatest theologian' there.

Keith-Falconer's stay in Germany had an unfortunate ending. In March 1881 he was confined to bed for about a fortnight by a severe illness, and when he was well enough to rise he decided to go home. His friend had planned to take a holiday in Switzerland before returning to England; but he generously offered to postpone this

holiday and accompany him as far as London. Keith-Falconer, however, would not hear of this ; he had no desire to upset his friend's plans, so he declared that he was quite well enough to go home by himself.

After his return he made the acquaintance of General Gordon, for whom he had a great admiration. This admiration appears to have been mutual. Gordon had recognised the worth of Keith-Falconer, for in a letter he asked him to go to Stamboul as extra unpaid attaché to Lord Dufferin, or as private secretary to Petersburg. If neither of these posts pleased him, he invited him to come out to himself in Syria. Keith-Falconer, however, did not accept any of these offers ; yet the invitation to Syria, in particular, appealed to him, and it was only after careful consideration that he rejected it. Some years later, when he was in Aden, he made reference to Gordon in a letter to his eldest sister, and added : ' I might have lived with him in Syria. What things

I have missed.' These words indicate that his refusal of the invitation was in the nature of a sacrifice.

At this period he was considering deeply what he should do with his life. Any of the proposals which General Gordon made would have opened up to him an interesting and useful career, but he felt that he was called to something higher. What that was, he did not as yet know. The serious consideration which he was giving to his vocation is shown in the following words taken from a letter to a friend: 'Pray constantly for me, especially that I may have my path in life more clearly marked out for me, or (which is perhaps a better request) that I may be led along the path intended for me.' In a few years this prayer was answered, and when the answer came Keith-Falconer was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Up to that time his Arabic studies had been confined to classical Arabic, in the study of which he had made good progress, but he was not satisfied with this. Written

Arabic and spoken Arabic are two very different things : one may be an authority on the literary language without being able to speak in a manner intelligible to an average Arabic-speaking person. So Keith-Falconer decided that he must gain some knowledge of the colloquial language. To do this to the best advantage it was advisable that he should go to a place where he would meet few Europeans, and thus be compelled to use Arabic. Assiout seemed to satisfy these conditions, so he decided to go there. It is about two hundred miles up the Nile above Cairo, and was at that time the farthest point on the Egyptian railway. There he could be reasonably sure of meeting few Europeans, and he would have the additional advantage of being near a Scottish missionary, Dr. Hogg, who was an excellent Arabic scholar.

About the end of October 1881 he left England, travelling overland from Calais to Marseilles. From there he went direct to Alexandria, and arrived in Cairo on

9th November. He stayed there for a short time until he had made arrangements for his stay in Assiout; and visited several places of interest before completing his journey. The strongest impression made upon him by that journey was the abnormal amount of dust with which he had to contend. Here is his description of the experience :—

‘The dust—I shall never forget it. I tried to read (Dozy’s *Islamisme*), but in a short time the book and I got so filthy with the dust that I became irritable and uncomfortable and could not read. After lunching on a dusty chicken, a dusty bit of cheese, dusty apples, dusty ham, dusty bread and some wine, I laid myself on the dusty seats and had a sleep for a couple of hours, and shortly arrived.’

After his arrival at Assiout he engaged a native teacher to come to him two hours a day, and began translating from a child’s reading-book—a good method of getting a grip of a language. He was very much impressed with Dr. Hogg’s varied

accomplishments. He was not only a first-class Arabic scholar: he also knew Italian thoroughly, and could preach in that language. He had formerly been able to preach in Turkish, but he had allowed himself to get out of practice. He had a fondness for philosophy, and had translated Calderwood's *Handbook of Moral Philosophy* into Arabic. He had, too, certain other interests akin to those of Keith-Falconer. He was interested in singing, and taught a class of students in Assiout the Tonic Sol-Fa system. He also knew shorthand, and had used it when he was a student at Edinburgh. It is good that Keith-Falconer found one of like tastes to himself, for in general he does not appear to have been very happy at Assiout.

In speaking of Egypt he says: 'It is a vile place for catching cold. Buildings seem to be constructed with a view to as many draughts as possible.' This is what he has to say about servants: 'There are no bells. That is the greatest drawback

of all. You have to go outside your door and clap your hands, and when you have repeated this performance five or six times, the Arab servant may begin to have a suspicion that somebody wants some one ; and when at last you get him, it will be very wonderful if he does what you want.'

Shortly after his arrival he had a fever and a severe cold—certainly not a good introduction to the East ; but it made him appreciate still more the kindness of Dr. Hogg, who did everything he could to help him, and nursed him till he became well again. At this time he was living with Dr. Hogg, but not long after his arrival at Assiout a hotel was opened, and he went to stay there. It had been advertised as ' first-class,' but it does not seem in any way to have deserved this description. To quote Keith-Falconer's words : ' There are no carpets or mats on the floors, which are of stone ; no wardrobes or chests of drawers in the bedrooms, no baths of any kind, and no sofas or arm-chairs. The servant, a kind of man-of-all-work, is a

Greek, and for stupidity, I think, unrivalled. The cooking is fairly good, I am thankful to say.'

He made good progress in the language, although he found that it was very hard. He was very soon able to make himself easily understood; but he made a short stay, leaving at the end of February, and so was not able to learn as much colloquial Arabic as he would have liked. While at Assiout he planned a camel ride to Kossair on the Red Sea, which would have taken him through Luxor, and the actual journey would have occupied a fortnight. In addition to the interest of the journey, it would have been excellent practice in Arabic, as he would have been alone with men who could speak no other language, and would have been compelled to use it always. He expected to take a week to Luxor, remain there a day or two to arrange about camels, and then take another week to Kossair; so he went to Cairo to get supplies for the journey.

A few days after his return to Assiout

he had an awkward experience. One morning the French consul forced his way into his bedroom and sternly ordered him to go back to France at once. He was under the impression that Keith-Falconer was a Frenchman who was a fugitive from justice, and it was with difficulty that he was persuaded of his mistake.

About the time he intended to set out for Kossair, Keith-Falconer had an attack of fever, and decided that it would be advisable to return to Europe without attempting this expedition. He went to Cannes in February 1882 and stayed there till the end of March. Then he went to Siena by way of Genoa, and stayed there a month to improve his knowledge of Italian.

CHAPTER VI

A VOCATION FOUND

IN the autumn of 1882 Keith-Falconer went back once more to Cambridge, where he went on with his Arabic studies. At this time he was also engaged in the translation of a famous book, *Kalilah and Dimnah*, from the Syriac, which has been translated from Persian into many different languages. In the preface to the Arabic edition it says that it was taken from the treasuries of India in the time of the Chosroe, Anushirwan, and translated into Persian. Later it was translated into Arabic, Turkish, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Italian, Spanish, French, German and other languages. It consists of a number of stories in which animals speak and act like men, and is very popular among Arabic-speaking people; at present its

Arabic form is one of the text-books in the schools of Aden.

Keith-Falconer occupied himself with the Syriac version, and after careful and accurate work he published his translation early in 1885. It was at once acclaimed as a work of great merit. Professor Nöldeke, the eminent scholar, said of it : ' We will look forward with hope to meet the young Orientalist who has so early stepped forward as a Master, many a time yet, and not only in the region of Syriac.'

In the spring of 1883 Keith-Falconer became one of the examiners for the Tyrwhitt Hebrew Scholarships. He took this work very seriously, going over all the ground very carefully and taking great pains to set fair papers. In his marking of the papers also he took great care, in the endeavour to do justice to every competitor.

In October he was appointed Hebrew lecturer at Clare College, Cambridge. This was most congenial work to him, for he was a born teacher and enjoyed teaching.

He spared himself no trouble in his work, and showed a great desire to help all who wished his help beyond what they received from his lectures. In the case of men who had not had a good grounding in Hebrew, he gave the tuition usually given by a private tutor without accepting the fee ordinarily paid for such tutoring. He did not feel justified in taking fees from men whose means were restricted. There was, however, one student who had been tutored by him who was quite able to pay for the tuition. Keith-Falconer charged him the recognised University fee and sent the money as a donation to Addenbrooke's Hospital at Cambridge, half in his own name and half in that of the student.

In this year he received another academic honour, being appointed one of the examiners for the Theological Tripos to be held in January 1884, and also for that in June. After the January results were published he went to Cannes for a holiday ; but he spent a considerable amount of his time in preparing his papers for the Tripos

to be held in June. His fondness for shorthand nearly got him into trouble in church one Sunday, when he was taking down the sermon. In a letter he says: 'A short-sighted lady, sitting near me in church, told her husband afterwards that next her had sat a very naughty boy who drew pictures all through the sermon, and that she had been on the point of stopping him.'

On 4th March 1884 he was married in Trinity Church, Cannes, to Miss Gwendolen Bevan, daughter of Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, of Trent Park, Hertfordshire. After a tour in Italy they returned to Cambridge in April.

Even when he was at Harrow, Keith-Falconer had felt that he must devote his life to religious work. In May 1873 he wrote: 'I have very nearly decided to become a Free Church minister.' Two months later he wrote again, the reference being to a book which Mr. Charrington had sent him: 'Every page is full of Jesus Christ, so that I liked it. And I

like Charrington, because he is quite devoted to Him, and has really given up all for His glory. I must go and do the same soon : how I don't know.'

It was towards the end of 1884 that he seems first to have thought definitely of going out as a foreign missionary. One of his missionary heroes was Dr. John Wilson of Bombay, of whom he was accustomed to speak in glowing terms. He was enthusiastic about Dr. George Smith's *Life of John Wilson*, which revealed to him Dr. Wilson's great ability as well as his efforts to help the people of India. He took a great delight in reading missionary biographies.

Another influence towards the mission field was the acceptance of his friend, Mr. C. T. Studd, for service by the China Inland Mission. Keith-Falconer and his wife were present at the farewell meeting to Mr. Studd at Cambridge early in 1885, and also at the meeting at Oxford. It can readily be understood how one like Keith-Falconer, who was keenly interested in the

advance of God's Kingdom in the world, should have had his imagination fired by such an event, and should have felt that he too ought to take his share in the work of the foreign field.

In the meantime he pursued his work at Cambridge. Soon after the publication of *Kalilah and Dimnah* in 1885 he agreed to write the article on Shorthand for the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, an article which required a considerable amount of work. He took up the subject very thoroughly, as any one who reads the article may see. He gave a historical account of English systems, with a detailed account of Pitman's Phonography. He also gave a summary of systems in use in other European countries, and concluded with a useful bibliography. When he was at home between his first and second visits to Aden, in 1886, he corrected the proofs of this article.

In 1885 he founded the Kintore prizes for Scripture at Harrow. They were first awarded in the summer of that year, on

which occasion he acted as examiner. He took a thorough interest in the study that should be undertaken for these prizes, discussing the details at great length: he was not one to provide the prizes and then take no further interest in the matter. When he received the papers to be examined, he was not contented merely with examining them and apportioning the marks: he also sent in a very careful report on the work done.

Yet another academic honour came to him at Cambridge, when he was appointed one of the examiners for the Semitic Languages Tripos of February 1886. He had now received the appointment of examiner in all the examinations which he had passed successfully himself. He was soon to go to Aden, but before going he set his share of the papers, though he was not able to return in time to take his part in examining.

His ability shows that Keith-Falconer might quite well have settled down to live the life of a scholar. He was eminently

fitted for it, and there is no doubt that, had he lived, he would have advanced to the front rank among orientalists ; but however attractive such a life might seem to him, he felt that there were higher claims. His mind had for some time been filled with the idea of undertaking foreign mission work, and in the beginning of 1885 this idea was given a definite direction.

Major-General Haig, R.E., had written a paper strongly advocating the evangelisation of Arabia. A summary of this paper was published in *The Christian* in February 1885, where Keith-Falconer read it. His mind was fired with the idea that he might help to carry out the General's desire. Without delay he asked for an interview with General Haig, and met him in London on 21st February. General Haig said of that interview : ' My impression of that conversation was that he came not only to get information, but to say that his mind was already made up to go out for six months and see what the place and

prospects of work were like. . . . We joined in prayer that he might be guided and blest in all his thoughts about Arabia.'

General Haig had specially felt that Aden was the place in which to begin missionary work. It was an important centre on the main trade routes to the East, being a coaling station at which ships of the great steamship lines coaled. It had the advantage of being under the British Government, and so of affording security to any one who started missionary work there. More important still, it was a centre upon which caravans from many parts of the interior converged. Thus it was not only a place where one could work among the resident population: it was a centre at which one could exert an influence upon people from many parts of the land. The variety of nationalities represented in the Aden Settlement promised a varied field of missionary labour, for there one could meet Jews, Parsis, Indians, Somalis, and many different classes of Arabs. Aden is a heterogeneous mixture

of peoples and religions. All these things told in favour of choosing Aden as the place where a mission should be founded in Arabia.

Another point to be noted was that the field was largely untouched. There was a Church of England chaplain, but he was expected to confine his ministrations to the troops and to the resident European population. There was also a Roman Catholic mission which was founded in 1840, and which still carries on work in Aden. At that time there were two Roman Catholic chaplains who worked among their own community and among Somali outcasts and orphans. A convent was kept by sisters of the 'Good Shepherd,' where friendless girls were maintained and brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. Little impression, however, had been made, for when people left the influence of the mission they soon reverted to Islam.

Thus in going to Aden Keith-Falconer could be assured that he was doing pioneer work. St. Paul says to the Romans:

' So have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation : but, as it is written, To whom He was not spoken of, they shall see : and they that have not heard shall understand ' (Rom. xv. 20, 21). In a very real sense Keith-Falconer, by going to Aden to work there as a missionary, would be able to say these same words of himself.

He immediately began to consider the difficulties that lay in his way, an important matter being the climate. Aden is well within the tropics, and so is naturally hot. It is a rocky peninsula with very little vegetation, the rocks making it hotter, for they radiate heat during the day and, in summer, keep the air warm during the night ; but in winter the climate is very pleasant. In summer the nights are hottest in places which are sheltered by the rocks.

The peninsula has two towns, five miles apart from one another—Steamer Point at the western extremity, and Crater at



A GENERAL VIEW OF SHEIKH OTHMAN

the eastern, between which lies an arid plain. Of the two, Steamer Point is the more pleasant in summer: there is one part of it which is almost as closely encircled by rocks as Crater, but other parts are more open, and get all the advantage of the night breeze. At Steamer Point are situated the Government offices, the offices of the steamship lines, and several bungalows occupied by Europeans. To the south and south-west, on headlands jutting out into the sea, stand a number of European bungalows and the offices of the Eastern Telegraph Company. On one of these headlands, Tarshein, stands the Residency, the home of the Political Resident.

Crater is the old Arab town of Aden. It is this town, and not the peninsula, which is called Aden by the Arabs. As its name signifies, it occupies the crater of an extinct volcano. The rocks enclose it on all sides but one, rising to their highest point in Jebel Shemsan, 1775 feet above sea-level. It is entered from the direction of Steamer Point by a narrow

pass from which the town appears lying below in the hollow.

It is obvious that Crater is the warmer of the two in summer. There is little, if any, difference between the two at that season as regards the day temperature, but at night the more open parts of Steamer Point are distinctly cooler. The temperature of Crater ranges from 75° in winter, to 100° or sometimes a little more in summer. At Steamer Point the maximum is similar to that of Crater, but the minimum goes a few degrees lower.

The question which Keith-Falconer and his wife had to face was whether they would be able to stand a climate like this. It is not one of excessive heat ; but it is enervating, as there is no really bracing weather even at the coldest time of the year. A normal person, however, ought to be able to stand it if he does not stay for too long a spell at a time. Keith-Falconer consulted the highest medical authorities regarding his wife and himself ; he read everything he could find about

Aden ; he consulted people who had lived there. Every piece of news that he received in its favour caused him great joy. For example, he heard that there was less sickness among the troops in Aden than in Bombay. He was specially pleased to hear from a lady who had lived in Aden several years that there were few days in the year when she could not play tennis at some time of the day. But she does not seem to have explained to him that it is not the heat that occasionally makes it impossible to play tennis, but a sandstorm (of which there may be as many as half a dozen in the course of the summer), or, very unusually, a heavy fall of rain. With all the facts he had gathered he decided that he could at least put the climate to the test, and so he prepared to go out for a few months in the first case.

He was anxious to found a medical mission in South Arabia, as he realised that medicine is one of the most efficient means of approach, besides being a valuable

boon in itself ; therefore he intended to have a fully qualified medical man to work along with him after he had come home from his first visit. At the same time he saw that it would be advantageous for him to have some medical knowledge himself. Accordingly he attended some lectures on medicine and saw some surgical work at Addenbrooke's Hospital at Cambridge. This is another indication of his thoroughness. He already had qualifications far above most missionaries to Muslims, but he wished to qualify himself as fully as possible for his work. Even although he would have a medical man with him, a certain amount of medical knowledge would be useful to him, for in an oriental country a layman can render help in many simple ways, especially when, as is likely to happen frequently, the doctor is away itinerating in the district.

Keith-Falconer was going out to Aden at his own expense, but he felt that it would be a mistake to go out as a freelance, for by offering himself as a recog-

nised missionary of some society he would have the sympathy and support of a large body of people at home. He had spent most of his life in England, and had been educated there, but his heart was still true to the Church of which his father had been an elder ; so on 14th September 1885 he met with the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, described the work he intended to do, and asked to be recognised as one of their missionaries. This proposal was gladly accepted, and he went out as a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland.

He had followed a course of study which had fitted him admirably for the work of a missionary to Muslims. He had done it not with that end in view, but simply because he had liked it. Yet all the time he was being prepared for the work of the mission field, and when the call impressed itself upon him he made a glad response. For a time he had been in doubt as to the future : now he had found his vocation.

But consider the greatness of the sacrifice

which he made. After his death, Dr. Rainy said of him : ‘ Very visibly he gave to the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus all he had. His university distinction, his oriental learning, his position in society, his means, the bright morning of his married life, I may add his physical vigour—for he had trained body as well as mind—he brought them all to the service. He did so the more impressively because he did it with no fuss about it.’ He gave the utmost to the Highest, and he did it gladly ; to him it appeared a duty, not a sacrifice.

CHAPTER VII

A WINTER IN ADEN

KEITH-FALCONER sailed with his wife on 7th October, doing the whole journey from London by sea, and arrived at Aden on October 28. They stayed for six weeks at the Hotel de l'Europe at Steamer Point, and then went to live in a house which they rented at Crater. In the previous chapter reference was made to the narrow pass through which one must go when entering Crater from the direction of Steamer Point. In this pass the road descends steeply to the town, and a short distance down from the top a path goes up to the right to the house in which Keith-Falconer lived. This house is situated up in the rocks overlooking the town. Its position makes it one of the best houses in Crater during the hot weather, as the sun at that season gets behind the rocks

early in the afternoon, so that the house is in the shade for some hours before the sun sets. In the cold weather its situation is not so good as that of other houses in Crater, for it gets more sun, and consequently more heat radiates from the rocks.

Keith-Falconer describes it thus : ‘ The whole town lies spread at our feet, the bazaars being about one mile from us. The house is perched on the side of a steep hill and is built in steps, so that our bedroom is much higher than the dining-room. There is a separate building (connected by a bridge with the house) meant for sleeping in : my wife’s maid sleeps in it. We have two rooms and a spacious verandah covered in by boards and lattice work (to break the force of the wind). In the evening we sit on the top of the house, and should sleep there in the summer. The verandah is our drawing-room and reception room ; the drawing-room proper we use as dining-room and study, and the room which is meant for the dining-room we sleep in.’ .

At that time there were a large number of monkeys in the rocks, and at night they made a practice of visiting Keith-Falconer's bungalow. He was naturally a hospitable man, but his hospitality did not extend to such visitors. Dr. Jackson, a friend of his, expressed the desire to come up some night and have a shot at the monkeys. It is not recorded whether he did so or not, but one may feel sure that Keith-Falconer would have welcomed him. In recent years, when an army officer said he would come along and shoot the flying foxes that were screeching every night around one of the mission bungalows at Sheikh Othman, he received a cordial welcome.

One of Keith-Falconer's earliest impressions of the inhabitants of Aden was that the Somalis were much more attractive than the Arabs, an impression which will probably be made upon every one on his first arrival. The Somalis are tall, athletic-looking men, with a fine carriage, who appear to be very happy and free from

care. The Arabs, on the other hand, do not come up to one's expectations of what Arabs should be. One pictures the Arab as a tall man in long flowing robes, with a venerable air ; but the Aden Arabs are the direct opposite of this, being small, stumpy men, wearing short skirts, and only too often having a furtive look in their eye. In course of time one gets a better impression of them, but the feeling of disappointment remains that they have not come up to one's previous conception.

Keith-Falconer settled down to work, his first duty every day being to give his wife an Arabic lesson, in which connection he says, in a letter to his mother : ' Arabic grammars should be strongly bound, because learners are so often found to dash them frantically on the ground.' During the remainder of the morning he read Arabic, and about four o'clock in the afternoon he went into the town, where he made a point of talking to the Arabs whom he met. In a letter to a friend he tells how one day he went with a

young Arab to the Tanks—huge reservoirs which have been built in the rocks above Crater to catch the rain water. At the Tanks there is a garden in which they sat reading, at the end of St. Luke's Gospel, a passage which impressed the Arab so greatly that he asked to be allowed to come every evening to hear more. It is an interesting fact that, although the Koran teaches that Jesus was not crucified, and so makes the Resurrection an impossibility, the story of the Resurrection seems to impress the Arabs more than any other part of the Gospel. Keith-Falconer evidently found it so in the case of this young man, and those who have succeeded him have had similar experiences.

A few words on Islam may be of value to those who are not acquainted with the teaching of this religion. Mohammad began to teach in Mecca in the first half of the seventh century of our era, his chief doctrine being that there is only one God. 'There is no god but God, and Mohammad is the apostle of God,' is an expression of

his early teaching, and now represents the simplest form of the Mohammadan creed. He did not claim to overthrow the teaching of the past : he claimed to be leading the people back to the religion of Abraham, for he held that when mankind had begun to fall away from the teaching which God had given He sent another prophet to bring them back to the true faith. Thus every prophet brought the latest teaching from God, and was to be followed, for he had superseded all his predecessors. The result of this is that Mohammad held that, just as Jesus had superseded all the prophets and teachers of Old Testament times, so he superseded Jesus. The Law of Moses, the Psalms, the Gospel of Jesus were all from God and were to be revered as such, but the Koran which was revealed to Mohammad was God's final revelation to man, and was to take precedence of all other sacred books. In course of time a great body of tradition arose, which became second in authority to the Koran itself : great men produced systems of law on the

basis of their interpretation of the Koran and the traditions. Islam is now a mighty system which governs every part of life. It is a religion in our sense of the word : it is also a system of law and a social system.

It is impossible in a book such as this to go into details regarding Islam. The main point to be borne in mind is that it teaches the absolute unity of God. Mohammad was under the impression that the Christian Trinity referred to God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Virgin Mary the mother—a blasphemous doctrine to us as well as to him. He held that the Christians taught that there were three Gods, whereas the true doctrine was that God is one. His mind being incapable of understanding that the highest form of unity involves complexity, he ardently taught that God is a simple unity. The idea that God should have a Son was revolting to him, for he looked at such a matter from a purely physical point of view, and even made Jesus say, in the pages of the Koran,

that He had never claimed to be God's Son.

Keith-Falconer greatly astonished the Arabs by his knowledge of their literary language, and frequently noticed people looking at him and saying, ' That man knows Koran and nahwi ' (*i.e.* grammatical, literary Arabic).

Whilst he tried to influence the people of Aden, he did not forget those of his own race who were resident there. In the Aden Settlement there is a fairly large garrison, a number of whom are stationed at Crater. He made himself known to the soldiers, and invited any of them who wished to come to his house in the evenings. The men appreciated his kindness greatly, and many of them accepted his invitation. He used to give them tea and conduct a short devotional service before they left.

He had not been long in Aden when he recognised that Sheikh Othman would be the most suitable place for a mission station. It was a village on the mainland about eight miles from Crater and ten

from Steamer Point, and had, as it still has, several advantages over Aden. It has a more pleasant climate than most parts of the peninsula. Practically all the year round the nights are cool—a very valuable point, for the opportunity of a good sleep at night makes up for a great deal. There is a considerable amount of vegetation at Sheikh Othman. It is on the edge of the desert, and cannot boast of any grass, but there are large numbers of trees and some large gardens of date-palms. These points are of importance for the comfort of the missionary. But apart from having more greenery than Aden, Sheikh Othman has another great reason for being a good place for a mission station. It is on the trade routes from the interior, and all the caravans that make their way into Aden must pass through it. Thus it affords an opportunity of getting into touch with people from many parts of Arabia to which the missionary cannot go himself. Arabia was in Keith-Falconer's time, and is still,

practically a closed land. It can thus readily be seen how Sheikh Othman is a strategic position. Being a smaller place than Aden it is easier there to meet and influence those who pass through in caravans.

At that time, too, there was some talk of the Church Missionary Society commencing work in Aden, and Keith-Falconer felt that by moving out to Sheikh Othman he would leave Aden as a field for that society. While he hoped to work in co-operation with any others who should come, he wisely decided that it would be better for the two missions to have definite spheres of work, so that there should be no overlapping.

The work that Keith-Falconer hoped to start at Sheikh Othman consisted of an industrial refuge, a day-school, and a surgery. He felt strongly that work among the children and medical work were the two principal doors to Arabia. It seemed to him to be well-nigh impossible to do much with Muslim adults, but he was sure that much might be done with the children.

He had found that there was not even one in Aden whom he could call a good carpenter, a fact which made the idea of the industrial refuge appear more valuable. Much good could be done if boys were taught a trade while, at the same time, they were brought up in the Christian faith. Medical work, too, provided great opportunities, for Arabs frequently came long distances to the Government hospital at Aden for treatment. If a surgery and dispensary were opened at Sheikh Othman these people would probably come there, where they would hear the message of the Cross.

In a letter to General Haig, Keith-Falconer gave some of the reasons that made him decide on Sheikh Othman. Crater and Steamer Point had already a sufficient provision of free schools and free hospitals from Government, whereas the provision at Sheikh Othman was inadequate. The climate of Sheikh Othman was less enervating than that of the peninsula. It was nearer the interior, and so

somewhat removed from the bad example of some of the Europeans who lived in, or passed through Aden. Another point in favour of Sheikh Othman was that it would be very difficult to get a good site at Aden. He intended to erect all the buildings at his own expense and hand them over to the Free Church of Scotland when they were completed.

These were all plans to be carried out on his second visit. During his first visit to Aden his missionary efforts were mainly confined to talking with individuals. One day, when he was talking to a group of men, one of the company was very much surprised at his knowledge of Jesus Christ. Muslims know him under the name of Isa, son of Miryam, and know that He was a great prophet; so this man who expressed astonishment knew His name quite well, but he seemed to have had no idea that the Christian religion had anything to do with Christ. In the letter in which Keith-Falconer tells of this incident he goes on to say: 'Many imagine that

Europeans are clever people who get drunk and have no religion to speak of.' He blamed the Roman Catholics for giving the people a wrong impression, saying that Muslims considered them idolaters.

He made an expedition inland with a Scottish military doctor to Lahej, a district about twenty-five miles from Aden, visiting its capital, El-Hautah. There he obtained a very low impression of the Sultan, and of conditions generally. The amount of disease and misery was appalling, and both he and his friend agreed that a medical missionary would be fully occupied in that 'wretched town.' The Sultan himself consulted the doctor, but when he was told that he should take some daily exercise, he replied: 'Impossible! If I show my nose outside my palace twenty men run after me crying for justice.'

The Sultan took them to see his chief secretary, who, to Keith-Falconer's surprise, proved to be a man to whom he had given a Gospel in Aden. He now asked for a complete Bible. This incident showed

how Scriptures given in Aden might be carried a long distance into the interior. Keith-Falconer had been warned to be very careful about mentioning religious subjects in Lahej, but he took Gospels with him and found that the people were very glad to get them.

Before leaving Aden for home, he applied for a garden plot at Sheikh Othman, and received a note from the municipal officer saying that the site which he had asked for would be reserved for him till the end of the year. The plot measured 510 feet by 510 feet, and had a very good situation. There are two villages of Sheikh Othman, the original village called 'Old Sheikh,' and the new one 'El-Hafis.' There is a Settlement office in the new village, and from this office it gets its name. 'Hafis' is the Arab corruption of the word 'office.' The plot which Keith-Falconer was granted lay between these two villages. No more convenient site could have been obtained.

Having made these arrangements for founding the mission in the following

winter, Keith-Falconer sailed with his wife from Aden on 6th March. The months which he had spent in Aden convinced him that, with reasonable care, he and his wife ought to be able to stand the climate quite well. He had suffered from two slight attacks of fever, but this did not trouble him. He told his friends that in Aden people thought no more of these fevers than those at home do of a cold in the head. His stay in Aden had also convinced him that he had entered upon a field where a great work could be done ; so he looked forward with pleasure to returning in October with a doctor as his colleague.

CHAPTER VIII

A STRENUOUS SUMMER

BEFORE Keith-Falconer had gone out in 1885 he had received recognition from the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland. He now wished to receive formal recognition from the General Assembly which met at Edinburgh in May, so he went up from Cambridge in time for the Foreign Mission day. Colonel Young, convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, in presenting his report that day, told the Assembly of Keith-Falconer's offer in the previous autumn, and of how he was now asking for the recognition and sympathy of the Free Church. This was gladly granted.

According to the usual custom addresses were to be given at the evening meeting by missionaries at home on furlough, and Keith-Falconer had been asked to be one

of the speakers. He was very much gratified when he was asked to occupy during the meeting the seat which his father had been accustomed to occupy at the Assembly. In his speech he gave a few facts about Islam, described some of his experiences in Aden, and gave expression to his hopes. He told the Assembly how he had been urged frequently to open a school. One day a man had asked him for a piece of paper, and when he had received it, wrote : ' If you want the people to walk in your way, then set up schools.' This man had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, and so had earned the title of 'Haji.' Keith-Falconer had offered him a copy of St. John's Gospel, but he refused it. His reason was that, although he liked the narrative parts, there were parts that made him tremble. The story of Jesus speaking to the woman at the well of Samaria was one such passage, particularly the verse : ' If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldst have

asked of Him, and he would have given thee living water.' The haji said : ' That verse makes my heart tremble, lest I be made to follow in the way of the Messiah.'

He told the Assembly of his desire to set up a school, and of his belief in the value of distributing Scripture portions among the people. This, however, should not be done indiscriminately. He had always assured himself that a person could read before he gave him a book. He believed in zeal, but it should be mixed with a little common sense. He told them also of his desire to have a medical missionary, who would require to be a skilled surgeon, for people often came long distances to have operations performed. In conclusion, he mentioned some difficulties. The language was difficult. Muslims were satisfied with their own religion. The duty before them was to rouse the consciences of the people. This speech was listened to with interest by the large meeting, and created a great impression.

It is the custom for missionaries who are going abroad for the first time to be presented to the Moderator on the Foreign Mission night, and on this occasion four young men were to be presented. It had not been suggested that Keith-Falconer should be included along with them, but when he saw them standing up, he said to the Foreign Mission secretary : ‘ How much I should have liked to have stood up with them. Is it too late even now ? ’ It was felt, however, that it was too late, for the Moderator had already begun to address the young missionaries ; so the original plan was not altered.

Keith-Falconer was thus welcomed and recognised as a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, and was cordially thanked for the generous proposals he had made for the establishment of the mission. He was not only going out at his own expense : he was taking upon himself the cost of erecting the mission buildings, and he had agreed to pay the salary of the doctor for a period not exceeding seven

years. This last proposal might have made the doctor feel that, in thus receiving his salary from his colleague, he was in a subordinate position. With rare tact, Keith-Falconer suggested that he should give the sum annually to the Treasurer of the Free Church, and that it should be paid by him to the doctor.

Keith-Falconer had still a few months in which to find a doctor who would accompany him to Sheikh Othman in the autumn. He heard of a man who was working in a small hospital in the East End of London, and at the same time Mr. Charrington had asked him to come up to London to report an address which was to be given by Spurgeon at the Assembly Hall ; so he decided to combine the duties of interviewing the doctor and reporting the address in a short visit to town. The doctor whom he went to see was Dr. Alex. Paterson, but at that time he was unable to go out ; and when Keith-Falconer went to the hospital he was not successful in seeing him. It is interesting

to note that Dr. Paterson went out later to Sheikh Othman as a medical missionary, and that he was the fifth man who went from that little hospital in the East End of London to the mission field.

Early in the summer Keith-Falconer was offered the post of Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in Cambridge University, an offer which gave him cause for much thought. He was looking forward to going out to Sheikh Othman in October, and such a post as that proposed to him would demand a great amount of time; but after due consideration he decided to accept it. The duties were not such as made it necessary for him to stay in England; the patent of appointment merely bound the professor to give one lecture a year. So, by treating this as an academical year, he could allow a period of a year and three-quarters, if necessary, to pass between one course of lectures and the next. Another point that made him decide to accept the professorship was that the position might be used to give

greater weight to what he said about the evangelisation of Arabia. He would be speaking not merely as a missionary, but as one whose qualifications to speak were such as had gained him a professorship in an ancient English university, and that, too, the one which is more famous than any other for the study of Arabic.

He lost no time in choosing the subject of his first course of lectures, deciding to lecture on the Pilgrimage to Mecca. He proposed to deal with the importance of Mecca in pre-Islamic times and with the pagan rites of those days ; then with the practices of the Muslim Pilgrimage ; and finally with Europeans who had visited Mecca in disguise. This in itself was a large undertaking for the time at his disposal ; but he had other things to attend to as well. The proofs of his article on Shorthand for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* were now ready, and he had to correct them. The reading of such proofs demanded a great deal of time and care. He had still to find a doctor to go out with

him ; and he had also many other things to do, such as fall to the lot of one who is preparing to set up a home in another land.

He proceeded strenuously with the preparation of his lectures, reading all that he could find on the subject of the Pilgrimage, making notes in shorthand on the margin of the books he was reading, and also in a note-book. His desire to be as thorough as possible had a striking example in the way in which he went about this work. A very valuable book on the subject is Snouck Hurgronje's *Het Mekkaansche Feest*, which is written in Dutch. Keith-Falconer did not know Dutch, and there was no English translation of the book. The average man might have decided regretfully that this source of information would have to be left untouched. Not so Keith-Falconer. The obvious thing for him to do seemed to be to learn enough Dutch to read the book ; so he spent three weeks studying that language, and as a result of that short

period of study he was able to read the book with comparative ease.

Amid all his multifarious duties he kept up his interest in bicycling. In August he was one of the judges at the races of the Y.M.C.A. club at Cambridge, at which time he was president of the club. That same month the annual supper of the combined athletic clubs of the association was held, with Keith-Falconer in the chair. In reply to the toast of his health he gave an amusing account of some of his early bicycling experiences, and finished his speech on a serious strain. He said that the purpose of exercise and amusement was to fit a man better for serious work. When a man had come to years of discretion he should not be altogether absorbed in sports.

In August he heard of Dr. Cowen, who afterwards went out with him to Sheikh Othman, and who was at that time on the staff of the Western Infirmary at Glasgow. An appointment was made for 16th August when Keith-Falconer went to Glasgow to

see him. Dr. Sinker, his biographer, says of that meeting : ' Each speedily saw that he had found a man to be absolutely trusted, and from whom complete sympathy and support could be looked for. With growing acquaintance, Keith-Falconer came to see that no more loyal, no more zealous companion could have been found. After events showed clearly how well grounded his choice had been.'

CHAPTER IX

SPEECHES GRAVE AND GAY

KEITH-FALCONER stayed during September and part of October with his family, who were spending the summer at Darn Hall, a few miles north of Peebles, during which time he was by no means idle. His time was fully occupied with his lectures on the Meccan Pilgrimage and with correspondence about the mission. So anxious was he to gather all the information he could for his lectures that he consulted books in various languages, sparing no pains in his endeavour to be accurate. This desire for accuracy is further shown in the fact that he wrote out the matter of the first lecture at least four times.

On the last Sunday of September a missionary meeting was held in the Free Church at Peebles in order to give the people an opportunity of hearing him

speak about the mission in South Arabia, when a large congregation gathered together and listened with great interest to his address, which dealt with his experiences in Aden and his plans for the future.

In the middle of October he returned to Cambridge. His original plan had been to go back to Aden that month, but circumstances had caused him to delay his return. He had now arranged to give his lectures at Cambridge in the second week of November, and then set out for Aden immediately after he had delivered them.

There is still one more instance to be remarked upon showing his interest in bicycling, the occasion being the annual dinner of the London Bicycle Club, which was held on 29th October. He had been president of this club since 1st May 1877, and had rarely missed the annual dinner. This year there was a large gathering, and Keith-Falconer took the chair. In the course of the evening he made some very happy speeches. The first toast was the Queen's health. This being the year of

her jubilee, he proposed her health, 'since whose accession some fifty years have circled, or may I say more appropriately, have cycled, round.' In proposing the health of the visitors he told an amusing story about one of his own guests who had had an accident during a cycling tour in the Highlands. As it gives an example of his rich humour and his powers as a raconteur, it will be well to quote it. He said :—

'Then we have my very old friend, Mr. ———; he comes from the sister isle. He is the hero of a hundred bicycling exploits, and perhaps I might recount a small incident. We were riding in the north of Scotland—it only shows you what a daring cyclist he is—far away from railways and civilisation; I said "Ride carefully, don't go fast down these hills." It was no use, speed was everything; presently I came gingerly round the corner. I saw a bicycle lying in the road, and a foot peeping up through the hedge. It turned out he had dislocated his elbow,

but he jumped on again and rode with me twenty miles. That evening we saw a first-rate London doctor, who was visiting in the neighbourhood. He said, " You must give up your tour ; fomentations, cold-water taps, etc. ; you must go home." He was not satisfied with that prescription, for he thought it might be remedied then and there. We got to a local surgeon's, who looked at the limb, and said, " Oh, that 's just dislocated ; I will put it straight in three minutes," and went for the chloroform. He got him on the sofa, I sat on his legs. The surgeon came and said, " Now, if I hurt you, what will you do ? " " I will hit you in the eye." " Then I 'll hit you back." However, in ten seconds the arm was right, and in twenty-four hours we were in the saddle, and completed our tour. I think that will show you that he is an admirable representative of the pluck of the British race.'

With this toast was combined that of the Press, in which connection Keith-Falconer took occasion to speak of

shorthand, which he called 'the literary bicycle.' The reason for this was that it clears the ground so quickly. 'I think, you know,' he said, 'that cycling and shorthand somehow go together.'

Here we have a picture of him as chairman at a dinner. He is as much at home there as on the track, in the college classroom, or in the mission hall. He was truly an all-round man: there was no one-sidedness about him.

He still had a keen interest in Mr. Charrington's work in London, and proposed to insure his life for a large sum for the benefit of this work. The doctor of the insurance company to which he applied passed him as a first-class life, but when the company heard that he was going to live at Aden they demanded a premium so prohibitive that he did not go on with his proposal.

The Barnwell mission at Cambridge also interested him greatly. Not long before he left England he instituted a lending library at the theatre, which new venture

he helped by subscriptions and by choosing suitable books. He also suggested the appointment of a missionary for Barnwell, and offered £50 for two years towards the payment of his salary. That the work was carried on in co-operation with the Parish Church is shown in a letter which Keith-Falconer wrote to the vicar of Barnwell on his return to Aden. The vicar had offered an annual donation which was gratefully accepted. Keith-Falconer said that he had no objection to the missionary being a churchman, and suggested that the work in Barnwell might go on successfully if the vicar and his curates entrusted the missionary with the task of looking after those people who never attended church. He concluded his letter with these words: 'If the people he reaches all go to your church and not to the theatre, I shall not grieve. So long as they are under the power of the Gospel I am satisfied. (Never call me a bigoted dissenter after this !)'

On 6th November Keith-Falconer went

to Scotland to speak at missionary meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The matter of these addresses is worthy of mention, both for its own value, and because he was making his last public appearance in Scotland. The addresses at both of the meetings were practically the same. He began by giving the following clear outline of what he meant to say :—

‘ I wish to show (1) that there are weak points in Islam, which, if persistently attacked, must lead to its eventual overthrow, while Christianity has forces which make it more than a match for Mohammedanism (or any other religion), provided always that it has free play and a fair field ; (2) that the efforts already made to Christianise Mohammedan countries have produced commensurate results ; (3) what practical encouragement we had during our four months’ residence in Aden. In conclusion, I wish to make an appeal.’

In dealing with his first point, he held that ‘ as the Law to the Jews, so Islam to the Arabs, is a schoolmaster to bring

them to Christ.' He mentioned the fact that Mohammad thought that he was restoring the religion of Abraham. He did not claim to be a destroyer: he claimed to verify what had come before. 'What a handle has he thus given us! for a Muslim cannot logically refuse to receive the Gospel, since it was to confirm its truth that the Koran was given.' In the second place, he gave some facts with regard to the progress of Mohammanadan missions; and in the third place he told of experiences, most of which have been mentioned already.

His appeal at the end was the most telling part of his speech. He addressed himself particularly to any who had ample independent means and who were not fettered by home ties. 'Perhaps you try to think,' he said, 'that you are meant to remain at home and induce others to go. By subscribing money, sitting on committees, speaking at meetings, and praying for missions, you will be doing the most you can to spread the Gospel

abroad. Not so. By going yourself you will produce a tenfold more powerful effect. You can give and pray for missions wherever you are, you can send descriptive letters to the missionary meetings which will be much more effective than second-hand anecdotes gathered by you from others, and you will help the committee finely by sending them the results of your experience. Then, in addition, you will have added your own personal example, and taken your share of the real work. We have a great and imposing war-office, but a very small army. You have wealth snugly vested in the funds, you are strong and healthy, you are at liberty to live where you like, and occupy yourself as you like. While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism and of Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the mission field.'

These words were addressed to those who had independent means, but the last sentence in particular is well worthy the consideration of every one who has the ability necessary to make him or her fit for the work of a foreign missionary : ' We have a great and imposing war-office, but a very small army . . . the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the mission field.'

The Glasgow meeting was held on a Tuesday evening, and that same night Keith-Falconer went to Cambridge, where he was to deliver his lectures on the Pilgrimage to Mecca on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. He delivered them in one of the rooms of the Divinity schools. Except for Arabic words, they were written wholly in shorthand, but he was so skilful at this art that he was able to read them as well as if they had been written in long-hand. He followed the plan upon which he had decided at the beginning, showing

in his first lecture that the Meccan Pilgrimage was an important event in heathen Arabia before the time of Mohammad; describing in his second lecture the Mohammadan ceremonies; and in the third giving an account of Europeans who had been successful in visiting Mecca in disguise. Since then one more, at least, has accomplished this dangerous feat—Major Wavell, who afterwards rendered fine service during the Great War in East Africa, where he was killed. He was only thirty-four years of age when he died. He went in the disguise of a pilgrim to Mecca at the age of twenty-six, in the year 1908.

Keith-Falconer's departure from Cambridge was very hurried. At the beginning of November his wife had gone to Cannes to wait there with her people till she should depart for Aden. On the Saturday Keith-Falconer finished his third lecture at three o'clock, and his train for London was due at seven. A certain amount of packing had of necessity to be left till the last

moment. His biographer describes the last few hours at Cambridge thus :—

‘ Two men were engaged in packing a large quantity of books, many of which he had wished to be able to use to the last. Giving directions to these men, carefully sorting various papers, constantly interrupted even in the midst of a hasty dinner by persons to whom orders had to be given, Keith-Falconer, in the midst of a chaos of packing and a multiplicity of details of business, and on the eve of a journey half across the world, was as calm and undisturbed as if he were simply leaving home for a few days.

‘ He was very bright and cheery, but not with the exuberance of hopefulness sometimes seen in one who is about to essay new work far away. It was an unruffled composure ; and no excitement, no hurry, no thought of the personal side of the enterprise seemed to mar the bright, perfect calm.

‘ So too was it to the last. As he stood on the platform of the railway station,

accompanied by his little dog "Jip," which was to go with him to Aden, and has since returned in safety, it seemed inconceivable that a man starting on so long a journey, with work so anxious awaiting him at the end of it, should have shown himself not merely happy, but absolutely calm and undisturbed.

'A few short minutes while the train stopped, and then, one of the most gifted, many-sided of the sons whom our dear mother Cambridge ever reared had left her walls for ever.'

CHAPTER X

THE 'SHANTY'

KEITH-FALCONER spent a day in London bidding farewell to friends, and a day in Paris buying some oriental books, before going on to join his wife at Cannes. They then embarked from Marseilles on 18th November for Alexandria. Dr. Cowen had left London on 16th November sailing all the way to Aden, and Keith-Falconer hoped to join him at Suez. He spent six days at Cairo, and then proceeded to Suez, leaving his wife with Dr. and Mrs. Watson of the American Mission, with whom she was to stay until preparations had been made to receive her at Sheikh Othman. While at Cairo she spent her time taking Arabic lessons and visiting native houses, thus preparing herself more fully for the mission work to which she was looking forward.

Keith-Falconer's plan of travelling with Dr. Cowen was doomed to be disappointed, for there was no accommodation for him on the steamer. He took a passage in an Austrian Lloyd steamer which passed so close to Dr. Cowen's boat in the Red Sea, that the two missionaries were able to recognise one another. Dr. Cowen arrived at Aden on 7th December and Keith-Falconer the following day.

Although he was disappointed in his original plan, this disappointment had its compensations. The English steamer went direct to Aden, while the Austrian boat called at Jeddah, the port for Mecca. Keith-Falconer would dearly have loved to have gone ashore there, but he was not allowed to do so on account of quarantine restrictions. As he stood on the deck of his boat he gazed long at the hills which hid Mecca from him, yearning for the day when it would be possible for missionaries of the Cross to proclaim the Gospel in that closed city.

He had an interesting companion on

board from Suez to Jeddah, who was able to give him some information regarding a point in Keane's account of his visit to Mecca. He tells that an Englishwoman had lived for many years in Mecca as a Mohammadan, and that he had spoken to her, for his disguise did not conceal his nationality from her. Keith-Falconer asked his companion (whose card read—H.M. Ismail Khan, of Datauli, Aligarh) whether such a woman had lived in Mecca, and was informed that she had. She was then living in Ismail Khan's house at Aligarh. Keith-Falconer says, in relating this incident: 'I then asked him some questions, and his answers tallied exactly with Keane's account. She is known as Zuhra Begum, which might very well be rendered Lady Venus, as Keane does. Was not this a curious coincidence?'

After their arrival at Aden Keith-Falconer and Dr. Cowen stayed at first at the Hotel de l'Europe at Steamer Point, during which period they paid several visits to Sheikh Othman. Then for a time

Keith-Falconer accepted the hospitality of the Resident and Dr. Cowen that of Dr. Colson. On 28th December Mrs. Keith-Falconer arrived at Aden.

Keith-Falconer was unfortunate in his arrangements for accommodation at Sheikh Othman. There was a good bungalow there, belonging to a Persian, Hasan Ali ; and it was hoped that it would be possible to rent it until a mission bungalow should be built. During the previous summer Dr. Colson had interviewed Hasan Ali on the subject, and he had said that he would be very willing to sell or let his bungalow. The question of rent, however, was not discussed at that time, as that was a matter for Keith-Falconer to arrange himself ; but he fully expected that he would be able to get this bungalow. He went to see Hasan Ali with a view to making an arrangement about the rent, and was told in true oriental style that he could have the bungalow for a few weeks for nothing. This, of course, was not an offer : it was merely a polite remark. Hasan Ali, like



A TYPICAL GROUP OF ARABIAN PEASANTS

most orientals when making a bargain, refused to state a price, so Keith-Falconer offered a sum that was generally considered to be fair ; but Hasan Ali would not accept it. Knowing that Keith-Falconer was comparatively new to the East, he probably thought that he could be persuaded to give a higher price. In any case, he would very naturally assume that the first offer was less than one was prepared to pay. But Keith-Falconer would not increase his offer, and Hasan Ali would not accept it, so the interview came to an end without anything being done. Dr. Cowen wrote :—

‘To have acceded to this demand would simply have been ruinous in all subsequent dealings with these men and those around, as they would have thought he could be “done” on every occasion in which money was concerned.’

Keith-Falconer found a small hut, forty feet square, which the owner was willing to let and alter for him. After General Haig, Dr. Cowen, and he had inspected it

together he decided to take it and live in it until a proper bungalow should be built. Hasan Ali, who doubtless had no intention of considering the question of renting his house closed with one interview, sent at once to reopen negotiations whenever he heard of the new turn which matters had taken ; but Keith-Falconer would have nothing more to do with him. He had no patience with such temporising. Dr. Cowen said that, in any case, Hasan Ali would only have let half of the house, ' and to have had drinking and smoking parties occupying the other half and singing bacchanalian songs in the verandah outside, would never have done, as the natives would naturally have associated us with them.'

Keith-Falconer made no further attempt to rent Hasan Ali's bungalow ; but it is interesting to note that Hasan Ali afterwards let it to the American consul on a five years' lease at the rent which Keith-Falconer had offered.

The question of which house a missionary

occupied would ordinarily be a matter of little consequence ; in this case, however, the consequences were very great, for the sickness which smote the missionaries later and the subsequent death of Keith-Falconer were attributed to the conditions in which they had to live. Keith-Falconer describes the hut which he succeeded in renting thus : ' It is a roof on four pillars with walls of iron lattice, the roof extending beyond the pillars on all sides. By putting in three wooden partitions a dwelling-house, with verandah, two bedrooms, and sitting-room (used also for eating and studying) is created. The house stands in a garden, and both belong to an Indian merchant. The servants will live in offices made of mud bricks, with roofs of bamboo and matting.'

It will readily be seen that such a house was not a suitable one for Europeans to inhabit in the tropics. It might have been good enough for the cold weather, but there was little or no hope of having a bungalow built by the beginning of the

hot weather. Things might have been very different if Keith-Falconer could only have rented Hasan Ali's bungalow ; but he felt that he could not reopen the bargaining after the way in which he had been treated when he first of all offered to rent it.

They occupied their hut at the beginning of January, and immediately set about erecting a shed near it in which to receive patients. The manner in which the missionaries were introduced to the people of Sheikh Othman was of rather a tragic nature. A well had to be dug in the compound and two Jewish workmen were employed to do this. While they were engaged in their work the earth fell in, and one of them was killed instantaneously. The news soon travelled to the village, and a large number of people gathered round the scene of the accident. Doubtless some of them would see in this a judgment of God on the unbelieving Jews and Christians.

Keith-Falconer and Dr. Cowen exerted

themselves to get their hut in order—or the 'shanty,' as Keith-Falconer called it—so as to be ready for Mrs. Keith-Falconer, who was to come out there to live on 12th January. A thatch roof was put over the existing roof to give more protection from the sun. At this time Keith-Falconer wrote: 'Our temporary quarters are very comfortable.' About a fortnight later he wrote again: 'We have at last got our temporary abode in order. The rooms are really very comfortable, and no one need pity us in the least.' At a later date Dr. Cowen wrote: 'Once in our little hut, we were very well and comfortable for about six weeks, but of course it was not a place for continued sickness, such as we had (though this again could not have been anticipated), and which indeed delayed the building of our new stone bungalow—in which we might reasonably expect to be well—quite two months altogether. . . . All this, I think, shows that every precaution that care and thoughtfulness could suggest was taken, and that our living in that little

hut was not due to any carelessness or indifference to health on his part. Also his firm stand against Eastern cupidity at the outset made him more respected even by those who tried to swindle him ; and his contentment and happiness in such humble quarters were also characteristic.'

In a letter to his mother Keith-Falconer gives an interesting account of how he spent his day at this period. It reads as follows :—

' 6-30. Get up. I take my bath at the well-side. It is very deep and big, and a camel walks round and round, working the wheel which moves a chain of little buckets descending into the water. I just sit down under the water as it flows out. It feels like warm milk. Then, after dressing, a cup of tea and toast.

' 7-8.30 is the appointed time for patients : but they often come later, and it will be some time before we succeed in making them observe the right time.

' 8.30-9. Bible reading in company.

' 9. Breakfast.

' 9.30-1.30. Arabic reading and patients, if any come.

' 1.30. Lunch or "tiffin."

' 2-4.30. Anything.

' 4.30. Tea.

' 5-7. Walk out with Jip.

' 7. Dinner.

' 8. Prayers, after which each goes to bed when he pleases.'

A list of subjects for study which was found among Keith-Falconer's papers after his death indicates the wide range of his reading, and shows how he was trying to equip himself as fully as possible for his work as a missionary.

Handwriting.

Grammar.

Arithmetic.

Reading practice.

Help G. (*i.e.* his wife) and Cowen.

Ja'cubi. (An Arabic book on geography which he was translating.)

Geography of Yemen, etc.

Bedawi language.

Medicine.

Somali.

Hindustanee.

Learn texts by heart—(1) Bible,
(2) Koran.

Supervise building and garden.

Correspondence.

Light literature.

Catalogue my Arabic books.

This list represents the subjects which he was studying, in addition to the practical work which he was carrying on among the people. He was anxious to obtain as much knowledge as possible of the district and of the language of the people, and in this latter respect he was not satisfied with a knowledge of Arabic as spoken in Aden : he must know the Bedawi dialects also, for one of the difficulties of a missionary in that part of the world lies in the variety of dialects spoken within a very small area. Then he met Somalis and Indians who had their own languages. Presumably most of them, as is the case



A GROUP OF CHILDREN AT SHEIKH OTHMAN

now, could speak Arabic after a fashion ; but he wished to be able to speak to them in their own languages, so he took up the study of Somali and Hindustanee.

The list shows us further that for the direct mission work he was studying medicine. We have already seen that he took some classes at Cambridge before going out for the first time. Now he was carrying on this subject of study. For the purpose of speaking to the people more effectively on religious matters he was learning verses of the Bible and of the Koran by heart in Arabic. This list of duties in itself is a wonderful testimony to his intensity of purpose.

At this period he started his work with vigour, and he was quite contented with the conditions in which he had to live. It was different a few months later, when he had suffered from several attacks of fever. Then he wrote, with an element of sardonic humour : ' This rather miserable shanty in which we are compelled to live is largely the cause of our fevers. It is all

draughts. Our address ought to be "The Draughts, Sheikh Othman." I sincerely trust that when we get into our house, which is now six feet above the ground, we shall be exempt from this nuisance.' But he was not destined to live in that house. A better mansion was already being prepared for him in a land where fever should rack him no more.

CHAPTER XI

MEDICAL WORK

A FEW days after the Jew was killed by the falling in of the well, the first patient came for treatment ; he was a next-door neighbour, being head gardener in the garden beside the compound in which the missionaries were living. He was very grateful for the benefit which he had received, and showed his gratitude in the manner in which they would most have desired—by telling his friends and trying to persuade them to go to the mission doctor.

It may be of advantage to mention here that many people have the mistaken notion that whenever a missionary doctor goes out to a new district the inhabitants immediately flock round him and express great joy at his coming : the reverse is more likely to be the case. The people are probably afraid or suspicious, and it is

necessary first of all to remove the fear and the suspicion. A pioneer medical missionary may even have to go the length of offering payment to some one who requires medical aid if he will come to be treated ; hoping in this way to make a name for himself : but it has never been necessary to adopt such an expedient at Sheikh Othman. Yet in some way a pioneer doctor must gain an opportunity of proving that he has something valuable to give ; then, if the treatment is successful, he may rest assured that ere long others will come without any preliminary persuasion.

In the case of Sheikh Othman the medical part of the work could not be said to be at the pioneer stage, for there had been Government doctors at Aden for many years, and there was also a Government dispensary at Sheikh Othman, so that the people had had an opportunity of learning the value of European medical skill ; but at the same time Dr. Cowen had to gain a name for himself. Once he had done

that, he could count on more patients coming to him than could well be coped with by one doctor.

The Arabs have their own system of medicine, a system which in general is similar to that of mediaeval Europe. It contains many prescriptions which are good, but it consists to a great extent of magic, certain verses of the Koran being credited with mighty power to protect from or cure disease. These verses are written out in the form of charms and are worn by the people in the belief that they will do their expected duty. One woman not long ago said that she had burned her arm and had tried one kind of medicine after another to no purpose; but when at last she bought a charm and tied it round the burn it began to heal at once. The Arabs have also a great belief in the cautery, which is supposed to be of value for almost any kind of trouble. A few years ago an Arab, who was being treated for phthisis in one of the Government dispensaries, declared that he did not

approve of the treatment which he was getting. He pointed to another man who had once had the same trouble as he, and had recovered at once whenever he had been cauterised. When the people have such ideas of their own so firmly rooted in their minds, a European doctor must be able to prove himself an efficient doctor and surgeon before he can wean them away from a belief in their native remedies.

Dr. Cowen was soon successful in gaining the confidence of the people. The hut which Keith-Falconer and he erected, in their compound, as a consulting room and dispensary was small, measuring only fifteen feet by twelve, yet, small as it was, it contained beds for three in-patients; and even at a fairly early period two people came a distance of eight miles for treatment and were received as in-patients. The hut was not much to look at: it had mud walls and a planked roof, to which a verandah of matting was added later; but to many it proved to be a very paradise. In the last week of January twenty new

cases came for treatment, and after six weeks about three hundred visits had been paid to the dispensary, in addition to visits paid by the doctor to people in their own houses—a remarkable record for such a short space of time. The fame of the new doctor was spreading.

Once they were settled in the 'shanty' preparations were made to build the new bungalow, the first business being to build a wall round their land. Keith-Falconer arranged a meeting of Arab contractors to whom he explained what he wanted with the help of a blackboard and chalk. Then the bidding began. After an hour and a half the contract was given to one who agreed to build the wall at the rate of 7s. 2d. per ten feet. The beginning of the work gave them great cause for hope, for their bungalow was now appreciably nearer.

The medical work went on regularly, the treatment of their early cases being very successful. The majority of those who came to the dispensary were Arabs; but among their earliest patients were an

Indian Mohammadan, a half-Arab, half-African, who was a runaway slave, and four Somalis; thus they were already beginning to influence the various communities in the district. At that time Keith-Falconer's work among the people consisted mainly in interpreting for Dr. Cowen, and in explaining to the people the reason of their coming: by being regularly at the dispensary he was also learning some more medicine and surgery. He found that he could speak easily with the Arabs of the Aden Settlement, but he had great difficulty in understanding the Bedouin. This is not at all strange, for to the European who has learned to speak Arabic in Aden the language of the Bedouin sounds strange, uncouth and unintelligible, their dialect and pronunciation being very different from those of the Aden people. Then there are several dialects spoken by people who come from different districts, a point which appears at first to be an almost insuperable difficulty; for when one is learning to speak a foreign language

he is inclined to be alarmed when he discovers that he must try to understand several dialects.

They had not been long in Sheikh Othman when they arranged a visit to Bir Ahmad, a village situated a few miles away, a little outside British territory. After they had decided on this expedition they heard that one of the nephews of the Sultan of Bir Ahmad was very ill, and so felt that this would open a way for them and assure them of an opportunity of introducing themselves to the people.

On 24th January Keith-Falconer and Dr. Cowen set out on camels at 7 A.M. for Bir Ahmad, another camel having been sent earlier in the morning with the medicine chest, for it was necessary that it should go at a walking pace to avoid breakages. They arrived a little before nine o'clock and were given hospitality by the Sultan, consisting of a mud room in which they rested and prepared their breakfast. Then the Sultan's nephew came to see them. Dr. Cowen says that he was

‘ a good specimen of the Bedouin Arab—quiet, hospitable and courteous in manner ; ignorant and superstitious about religion ; with a wholesome belief in the powers (real and imaginary) of European medicine, and decidedly grateful for benefits received.’ But although he had been helped by the doctor the people were still doubtful of their intentions and would not respond to the advances made to them. The adults kept away from them, but Keith-Falconer read some passages from the New Testament to the young people, and then Dr. Cowen and he went round to see whether they could find any one in need of a doctor’s help.

They came across an old woman who had suffered for years from dropsy, and Dr. Cowen was able to give her relief, with the result that when the people saw what he had done their attitude changed immediately. At first they had been suspicious of the strangers, and had made the non-committal statement that they thought there might be one or two sick people in

the village : now they were quite sure that there were not only one or two, but many. They eagerly led the missionaries from house to house to see those who were sick, and showed such unmistakable appreciation of the help which they were able to render that Keith-Falconer wrote about this visit : ' We might have stopped for three days and been hard at work all the time.' He gave some Gospels to boys who could read and delighted them by writing their names on the title-page.

This visit gave promise of useful work among the people of the district, as indeed Keith-Falconer had hoped it would, for he had written previously : ' As Sheikh Othman has 6000 people, Lahej 5000, and Bir Ahmad and other villages in the neighbourhood about 1500 between them, we shall have plenty of work without going far away.'

That the fame of the mission had spread some distance into the interior has already been mentioned in the case of the two in-patients who had come a distance of eight

miles for treatment. Keith-Falconer now tells of one who had come from Lahej, saying: 'We have one interesting case from Lahej, a man with an enormously enlarged spleen, the effect of repeated fevers from malaria. We hope to reduce it by local application of biniodide of mercury.' In a letter written to his sister about a fortnight later he tells about three in-patients which they had at that time. One of these was practically blind and very weak, so that they had little hope of curing his blindness, but expected that he would gain some strength before he left. Another had scurvy, and was progressing favourably. The third was 'a very bad case of heart-disease, liver-disease and dropsy,' who had come from Ibh, a town about one hundred miles distant, and who was not expected to live long. Of him Keith-Falconer says: 'Last night I left him crying aloud to Allah, and the Messiah. He is very ignorant, and I have told him that God loves every person who believes in the Messiah.'

This last case shows how Sheikh Othman was an excellent centre from which to influence a wide district, for people, such as this man from Ibh, arrive there from places far distant, and so give the missionaries an opportunity of influencing those who come from districts to which they cannot go themselves. One cannot calculate the good that may come to places in the interior from a mission in such a strategic position.

On one occasion a Turk from a place one hundred miles inland, who was on his way to Aden on official business, visited Keith-Falconer and was made heartily welcome. Keith-Falconer read him some New Testament portions, and they spent quite a considerable time discussing them ; Dr. Cowen was able to remove a slight trouble by means of an operation. So great was his gratitude that while he was in Aden he sent home for three large gourds of honey, which he gave to the missionaries along with two tame rabbits ; at the same time offering money for the help which he had received, and promising

that he would give them letters of introduction whenever they wished to travel inland.

The following incident shows the kindness of Keith-Falconer. When he had been at Bir Ahmad he had seen a man who required surgical treatment, and arranged with him that he should come to the dispensary next day ; but six weeks passed before he arrived. When he asked why he had delayed so long, his wife replied that it had been impossible to get a camel. Keith-Falconer asked her if no Muslim were willing to lend a camel to bring a sick man to hospital ; to which she replied : ' There are no Muslims now,' showing that she had some sense of the necessity of proving one's faith by works. It is not only in Christian countries that practice falls short of profession. When Keith-Falconer heard her explanation, he paid the hire of the camel both ways and kept the woman at the hospital until her husband left, as she wished to attend to him. She was very grateful for this kind-

ness, and twice brought a basket of twenty eggs in token of her gratitude.

Along with Keith-Falconer's kindness went an element of sternness, which could be shown when the occasion arose, as has been seen already in his refusal to be 'done' by Hasan Ali and his subsequent refusal to have anything more to do with him. It is also seen in his treatment of one of his servants who had beaten his wife and cut her head. Very firmly, and in a few well-chosen words, he told the man exactly what he thought of him, and then dismissed him on the spot. Thereupon, with a woman's faithfulness, the wife did her best to defend her husband, explaining that she was subject to epileptic fits, and in one of these had cut her head by falling against a box. Keith-Falconer took pity on her, and hired a camel to take her and her belongings away, but would have nothing more to do with her husband.

When, on the other hand, a servant did behave himself, Keith-Falconer could treat him very differently. One hot day he

came across his Somali servant agonising over an ice-machine, producing more perspiration than ice ; so he suggested to the servant a reason for the phenomenon. The heat passed from the water through the handle of the machine into the boy's body, and so produced the perspiration, an explanation which appeared to the servant to be very satisfactory.

His sense of humour was used one day to shame some Arabs into activity. Dr. Cowen and he were out in the village of Sheikh Othman, where Keith-Falconer was accustomed to visit the coffee-shops and talk to the people whom he met there, when they saw a man who was suffering severe pain, lying on a rope bed at the side of the road. Keith-Falconer asked some of the bystanders to carry the man to the hospital, but instead of doing so they called for coolies to come and carry him. This was too much for Keith-Falconer, who upbraided them thus: ' In our country, if a man is ill in the street, plenty of people would gladly carry him ; but

Muslims don't seem willing to lift a finger.' One of those present who heard him say this put a finger to his mouth and said : ' Lip-Muslims here.' Like many of his kind, he was quite willing to acknowledge deficiencies of character without feeling any call upon him to amend them. As no one was yet willing to help the man, Keith-Falconer signed to Dr. Cowen to take an end of the bed, and the two of them began to carry the man to the hospital. If words had been of no avail, the sight of two Europeans carrying a sick Arab was more than the people could bear to look upon with equanimity ; the missionaries were soon relieved of their burden, and the man was carried to the dispensary by the people who at first were unwilling to do anything.

Dr. Cowen was very much impressed by the enthusiasm with which Keith-Falconer spoke of his friends. He said : ' What struck me most was the warmth and duration of these friendships, some of them dating back ten or fifteen years or more.'

He gave a very practical example of his friendship when he heard that Mr. C. T. Studd was far removed from friends and books, for he carefully selected some books which he thought would interest him and sent them out to him in China. Keith-Falconer himself was far removed from much that he held dear, as is shown in one of his letters, where he says: 'We are more out of the world here than we should be at Aden, for we see no daily telegrams, and seldom a white face'; yet his own condition did not prevent him from letting his sympathy go out to one who was even more isolated than himself.

CHAPTER XII

A STRUGGLE WITH FEVER

THE story of the last three months at Sheikh Othman is one of continual struggle against sickness. On 9th February Keith-Falconer and Dr. Cowen visited Bir Ahmad a second time—Keith Falconer's last missionary visit outside Sheikh Othman ; for on the following evening he had the first of many repeated attacks of the fever from which he died ; yet he was able to go out with his wife to the verandah and talk to some Somali women who had gathered there. Next day a high fever developed which lasted for some days, so that Dr. Colson was called out from Aden to see him. He tried to encourage him by telling him that there was no danger in the fever and that it left no bad after effects. To make matters worse, the whole establishment seemed to become ill at one

time: Mrs. Keith-Falconer took a bad attack of fever; one of the Somali servants went down with fever; and when Keith-Falconer was recovering, his butler began to complain of fever. Fortunately Dr. Cowen escaped it at this time.

On the 19th Keith-Falconer was able to get up in the evening for dinner, and two days later he took a walk in the next garden. When he was convalescing he said in a letter that he had 'never felt so utterly miserable' in all his life as when he was suffering from that fever; but there is one remark in the letter which would probably require modification in the light of more recent knowledge of the subject. He said: 'Quinine is quite useless in this fever, one must simply grin and bear it.'

About the end of February he had a slight attack, and on 2nd March went with his wife for a change of air to Khor Maksar, a place situated on the isthmus about four miles nearer Aden than Sheikh Othman, and considered by some to be the healthiest

place in the Aden Settlement. Here they stayed for a week with Lieutenant Gordon, a nephew of Chinese Gordon, who was in command of the Aden troop. Keith-Falconer says of his host: 'He has the "magic wand," which the Chinese thought ensured victory to the "ever victorious army."' We became great friends. His room contains three pictures of his uncle, and he looks on his journals, etc., as a kind of Bible.'

From Khor Maksar Mrs. Keith-Falconer went to stay with friends at Crater, and Keith-Falconer to stay with Dr. Jackson at Steamer Point. While he was convalescing there he wrote a very cheery letter to his youngest sister, which shows that even fever was not able to make him forget the mission work, or to make him despondent. He told her that the wall round the compound had been completed, that they had obtained the stone for the bungalow, and that he had made a contract for the erection of it, the total cost of the building being about £500. Then he

added: 'Try and get some fat donations for the hospital. I believe that three of Mrs. ——'s dresses would build it. But I believe that we can do it without more help, as we are spending very little on ourselves now. Still a few little cheques would expedite matters.'

Even during his convalescence he was not idle, for he kept up his study of Hindustanee, one of the most useful languages in the East. His description of it, however, is not very complimentary; he calls it 'a mongrel jargon of Sanscrit, Hindee, Persian, Arabic and English.' One might equally well call English a 'mongrel jargon' of all the various languages from which it has borrowed. But he goes on to say of Hindustanee: 'I find it very awkward not to know it.' At the same time he speaks with enthusiasm of the medical work of the mission. 'I am acquiring quite a stock of medical knowledge. Ulcers are my forte at present. We get one hundred new patients a month. Some come from far inland.'

After having had a very trying time, he was back in Sheikh Othman by the end of March. His fever had kept returning, so that he had had five attacks in eight weeks, but he came back in good spirits. His wife had been more fortunate than he, and appeared to have made a quicker recovery. The work of the mission showed prospects of expansion, and Keith-Falconer decided that an assistant must be found for Dr. Cowen, who was to go home in the summer to get what was necessary to equip the medical work thoroughly. After his return it was hoped that, with the help of a native assistant, the work would go on prospering. They were already doing more work than was being done in the Government dispensary at Sheikh Othman, so that some official correspondence was going on in connection with medical work. Keith-Falconer thought that probably some arrangement would be made whereby the Government dispensary would be closed and a grant would be given to the mission ; but this has not materialised. Although

the medical work of the mission is still considerably greater than that done at the Government dispensary, the latter goes on serving a useful purpose.

Another matter for encouragement was the progress made with the building of the bungalow: by the beginning of April it had begun to rise above the ground. In a letter he gave the following description of it: 'The verandah is twelve feet broad, and the dining-room will form part of it, shut in by wooden partitions, or reeds and mats. The doors have glass in them, and serve also as windows. In this climate one is obliged to have a great many of them. The walls are of stone, the roof of wood and plaster. The floor will be plaster throughout. The verandah will be thatched. The rooms will be about twelve feet high.' He hoped that they would be living in their bungalow by the beginning of June, although it would not be finished by then; but this was not to be, for he had passed away from the heat and the fever three weeks before that time.

In the course of the month of April a gardener was engaged from Lahej to lay out the garden and stock it with palm trees. The Sultan of Lahej had twice visited Keith-Falconer, when he had been treated by Dr. Cowen ; and had asked him to be allowed to send fruit trees for the new garden. During Keith-Falconer's illness he sent him presents of water-melons, bananas and honey, thus redeeming somewhat the character which Keith-Falconer had given him on the occasion of his visit to El-Hautah during the time when he stayed in Crater.

Keith-Falconer's recovery lasted only a short time, for before the end of April he had other two attacks of fever. Yet he was not dispirited. In a letter to his mother, written on 1st May, he wrote : ' You need not have the slightest anxiety about us. At the present moment we are distinctly better than we were after the first attack. We are not being gradually worn out.' And further : ' To-day is very pleasant. Sun very hot, with a gentle

breeze blowing. I am also better and stronger. . . . Read Bonar's *Life of Judson* and you will see that our troubles are nought.' He had felt so much benefit from his visit to Khor Maksar, where the air appeared to him to be more bracing, that he had arranged to go there again for a few days to stay with Lieutenant Gordon.

During his illness he was by no means inactive, for he did a great amount of reading. He read several novels; Presensé's *Early Years of the Christian Church*, vol. i.; Blaikie's *Life of Livingstone*; most of Forbes's *Hindustani Grammar*; parts of Dr. John Brown's *Horae Subsecivae*; and a hundred pages of *Die verlorene Handschrift*, besides other books—a remarkable record for a man who was suffering from fever. He also wrote a large number of letters, which show that his heart and soul were in the mission work, although he was unable to take any active part in it at that time. In one of his letters he spoke enthusiastically of the work of Dr. Cowen, and told how they had then accommoda-

tion for six in-patients. He gave it as his opinion that Islam had no great hold on the people. At Mecca there is a sacred well called Zemzem, the water of which the pilgrims are expected to drink during the Pilgrimage. Some of them frequently carry a little of this water home with them, as it is believed to cure diseases. Keith-Falconer said : ' I used to offer our patients a choice between our medicine and Zemzem water. They always chose the former.' In another letter, in speaking of the people who came to the dispensary, he said : ' I long for health to get at them.'

He was always hopeful, and expected that he would soon recover. Having heard that in Aden the hot weather is healthier than the cold, he was convinced that their troubles would soon be over. The prospect of a better house and a healthier season encouraged him ; but although the letters which he wrote at this time show his good spirits, they were actually written on his death-bed.

On 5th May he felt better, and drove to

the compound where the new house was being erected, and spent more than half an hour there inspecting the progress of the building and giving instructions to the workmen. Next morning, however, he suffered another attack of fever. That day he said to his wife: 'Isn't it very strange? I get generally so depressed when I am unwell, but now I don't feel in the least cast down. After all these weeks of illness I feel in perfectly good spirits.'

He still had his Bible, his Hebrew Old Testament, and his Hindustanee Grammar near him, which he read when he was able. On the 8th the fever was still high, and he had a severe attack of ague. In the morning he said to his wife: 'How I wish that each attack of fever had brought me nearer to Christ—nearer, nearer, nearer.' By this time he seemed to have realised that his death might be near, for he said: 'I can most truly say that I am not afraid to die, in spite of my many shortcomings, but I do pray God that I may be spared

pain.' He spoke of the sufferings of his brother, Dudley, and of his joy at the thought of death. When he did not feel well enough to read himself that day, he asked Dr. Cowen to read the last chapter of Mark to him, saying : ' It is disputed, but that doesn't matter.' Doubtless the promises of power and of health given there were a means of great encouragement to him as he lay on his bed of weakness. That night he was very restless, yet in his fever he could think of others. A servant who was himself unwell was to sit beside him while Dr. Cowen went to visit a sick woman ; but he would not have this, as he was sure that it would tire him. He would not allow his wife to sit with him either, as she was not well ; so he wrote to Aden for a nurse.

Dr. Cowen had arranged to go home on 7th June to get equipment for the mission, but he said that he would wait longer if necessary. Keith-Falconer was very grateful to him for all his help, but he had no desire to cause the journey to be

delayed. His thoughts were all of Dr. Cowen, so he immediately began to pray that nothing might hinder him from returning home on the date arranged. On 10th May the nurse came. That evening Keith-Falconer again returned to the subject of death, asking Dr. Cowen if he thought there was any danger. Dr. Cowen tried to encourage him, telling him that he hoped there would be none ; but it was in the early hours of the following morning that he passed away.

Dr. Cowen had left him sleeping peacefully at ten, when he had gone to take a much-needed night's rest ; Mrs. Keith-Falconer, herself ill, was sleeping in the room next to her husband ; and the nurse sat up during the night with him. He was sleeping more calmly than he had done for some time, so at 4 A.M. the nurse lay down beside his bed and fell asleep. About a quarter to six his wife came in to see him, and found him ' lying on his back, with eyes half-open, and hands resting on the bed by his sides.' It

appeared that he had died in his sleep. His prayer was granted. His death was peaceful and painless.

‘He died at just Henry Martyn’s age,’ like him devoting his life for the sake of winning the Muslim. In the evening he was buried in the cemetery outside the town of Crater—a lonely spot in a hollow among the rocks, within sound of the waves of the sea. His mortal remains were placed in a grave there, far removed from many whom he held dear ; but they rest near the people for whom he worked and sacrificed.

CHAPTER XIII

A NOBLE EXAMPLE

THE news of Keith - Falconer's death reached home shortly before the opening of the General Assembly of the Free Church, at which both Dr. Somerville, the retiring Moderator, and Dr. Rainy, his successor, made reference to him in their addresses on the opening day. Dr. Somerville spoke of the sorrow caused by his death and of his 'self-sacrificing devotion to the highest of all causes,' adding that he was sure that God would bring some good result out of this calamity. 'What Christian Scotsman,' he asked, 'with qualities in any way resembling those of him who has passed away, will stand forth to raise the banner of the Gospel in the place of the gallant warrior who has fallen ?'

Dr. Rainy expressed very aptly the value

of the service and sacrifice of Keith-Falconer, saying: 'Whatever becomes of the mission of Ion Keith-Falconer, we have now the memory only. But it is a very profitable and admonitory memory. . . . Suddenly, to our thinking, the Lord has been pleased to take him up higher. We might think that, had he been spared, his life might have been fruitful, not only as a force abroad, but as an example at home; for he was the first in our Church's experience who was at once able and willing to inaugurate this special type of dedication to mission work, and his life might have been a standing appeal to others. But shall his death have no force as an appeal? Who comes next? Who will come with youth and trained mental faculties, and proved success in study and acquirements, and with position and means that make him independent, and give them all to the service? Or if these cannot be so equally combined, as in our lamented friend, who will come with the measure of those gifts they have, giving

all they have? It is sad that he is gone. But it will be a great deal sadder if it should turn out that his example fails to raise up a successor from among the young men and young women of our Church.'

Keith-Falconer had been a prominent figure at Cambridge, so it was fitting that reference should be made to him there. The late Bishop H. C. G. Moule, then Principal of Ridley Hall, closed his sermon preached before the University on 22nd May, with a tribute to the missionary. Once again he was held up as an example which others should follow. The preacher said: 'And what to us, what to the Christian Church, says the silence of the grave? When, forty years ago, the apostolic Krapf buried his wife at Zanzibar, and stood alone beside the tomb, "now," said he, "is the time come for the evangelisation of Africa from the eastern shore; for the Church is ever wont to advance over the graves of her members.'" That omen is fulfilling now. So shall it be in Christ's name for old Arabia, shut so long against

the Cross, but claimed now for her true Lord by our scholar-missionary's dust.'

A memorial service was held at Mile-End on the Sunday after the news of Keith-Falconer's death was received, when a huge congregation gathered together ; and once more he was held up as an example which others should follow. There were many in that district who owed him a deep debt of gratitude, and one may feel assured that here, more even than at Cambridge or in the General Assembly of the Free Church, he had an abiding place in the affections of the people. The platform was decorated with crape, and in the centre, facing the people, a portrait of Keith-Falconer was placed. The whole service was devoted to the thought of Keith-Falconer, the hymns, the addresses and the prayers all making reference to him who had sacrificed himself so nobly for the cause of Christ. To Mr. Charrington the loss of Keith-Falconer was a great blow. So great was the friendship of these two men that the author of *The*

Great Acceptance calls them David and Jonathan. In speaking of the loss to Mr. Charrington, he says: 'I can only say that, from my conversations with the surviving member of that happy Christian brotherhood, I know that the loss is, even to-day, after so many years, as fresh and keen as ever.

'And I know that not one of the least of my friend's hopes and anticipations is that of once more meeting in Heaven the man he loved so well on earth.'

Missionary magazines in Canada and the United States made reference to Keith-Falconer, but perhaps the most striking tribute came from the Free Church Presbytery of Kafraria, which resolved, on 8th October 1887, that 'steps should be taken to prepare a Memoir of the late Hon. Keith-Falconer, to be printed in Kafir, as a tract for circulation among the Native Congregations, with a view to impress them with an example of self-sacrifice.'

In London his name was perpetuated by a benefit society known as the 'Sons of

the Phoenix,' in connection with which a new lodge was opened in the summer of 1888 under the name of 'the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer Lodge.'

Much had been said of the example which Keith-Falconer's devotion should prove to others, and in one case, at least, there was a speedy response. Out of forty final-year students at New College, Edinburgh, one of the Theological Halls of the Free Church, eleven men offered themselves for the foreign mission field, besides two who had still a year of study to complete. One of these final-year students, Mr. W. R. W. Gardner, was appointed to Sheikh Othman along with Dr. Paterson, the doctor whom Keith-Falconer had tried to see when he was searching for a man to go out with him. Dr. Cowen had agreed to go back to Aden till the buildings were erected.

Keith-Falconer had founded the mission at Sheikh Othman, and had done it at his own expense ; thus there might have been a danger that the work which he had

started would come to an abrupt end with his death. To avoid any such possibility, his mother and his widow guaranteed the salary of two missionaries, on the condition that one, at least, of these should be a doctor, the Foreign Mission Committee undertaking to raise the funds necessary for the buildings, a sum estimated at £1200. An appeal was issued, and the money was gathered in a few months.

Dr. Mackichan, who was soon to return to Bombay, was asked by the committee to pay a visit to Sheikh Othman and examine the site of the mission. He arrived at Aden on 1st October 1887. The first thing to be done was to arrange for the transference of the grant of land to the trustees of the Free Church of Scotland, a thing which Keith-Falconer intended to do when the buildings were completed. On Sunday, 2nd October, Dr. Mackichan visited the grave of Keith-Falconer under what he called 'the gloomy hills of darkness'—a phrase which at once describes the black rocks of Aden, and conveys a suggestion

of the darkness which covers the hearts of the people. On the following day he went out to Sheikh Othman, where he visited all the places which had been made sacred by the presence of Keith-Falconer. Of the 'shanty' he wrote: 'As we went over the little unoccupied dwelling in which Mr. Keith-Falconer's last moments were spent, we realised something of the trials with which our missionaries had to contend in the beginning of their labours. The house is not only small but low-roofed, while the high wall which surrounds the enclosure must exclude much of the breeze which is so essential to healthful life in that region. There can be little doubt that the illnesses from which all the members of the Mission suffered were in great measure due to the peculiar position in which they were placed, rather than to any general climatic cause.'

He suggested one change in the original plan, a change strongly advised by Keith-Falconer's friends in Aden. He felt that the site which had been granted was not

a suitable place for the missionaries to live in, so he suggested that the compound and the building which had been begun should be used for the work of the mission, and that a bungalow should be built for the missionaries on another site farther removed from the villages. This plan was agreed to by the Foreign Mission Committee, and was soon carried out.



THE PRESENT MISSION HOSPITAL AT SHEIKH OTHMAN

CHAPTER XIV

HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH

THE work which Keith-Falconer began has been carried on at Sheikh Othman since his death, the only part of his suggested plan which has not proved to be a success being the industrial school which was instituted later. In this school boys were taught carpentry, but they did not understand the value of the training which they were receiving; for they declared that they were working and that they required wages for their work. It did not matter to them that they were often spoiling good wood in the course of their education: they were doing work, and work demands wages. It is impossible to carry on a school on these lines unless one has a very ample supply of money, so this branch of the mission's activities had to be stopped. In Aden to-day, as in

Keith-Falconer's time, there is hardly one good carpenter. Things might have been different if the boys of an earlier generation had only appreciated the advantages of the education in their trade which the mission offered them.

A school was opened by Mr. Gardner soon after he went out, and was carried on for a number of years, when it was transferred to Mr. Hoyer of the Danish Mission, who went out to do mission work in the Aden Settlement several years after Keith-Falconer's death. At first the missionaries of the two missions worked together, but after a time they decided that the work would be carried on more efficiently if the Free Church Mission devoted itself to medical work, and the Danish Mission to educational work. This was done, and Mr. Hoyer took over the school; but he transferred it later from Sheikh Othman to Crater, where it is still carried on.

After the war, when work was taken up again, the United Free Church Mission

opened an Anglo-Vernacular school for boys at Sheikh Othman in 1921. It has been impossible to get Christian assistants, so the school has necessarily been limited in numbers. When it was opened, there was a quick response; before long it became necessary to refuse admission to boys who made application, because there were already as many as could be dealt with in the circumstances. This shows that there is a good field for educational work if more workers could only be found.

Great progress has been made along the line of medical work. At the beginning conditions were such that several of the missionaries had to retire owing to ill-health, Dr. J. C. Young, who arrived in Sheikh Othman at the beginning of 1893 and who still carries on work there, and Dr. Macrae, who worked there for eleven years, being the only ones who have been able to live there for a long space of time. But conditions have now been greatly improved. In the year 1898 Sir Ronald Ross discovered that malaria is transmitted

by means of the mosquito, a discovery which has meant much to the health of Aden and Sheikh Othman. The mosquito breeds in water, and there is comparatively little water there, so it is easily possible to prevent the mosquito from breeding, with the result that malaria has practically been banished from the Settlement. It has only been at times when the authorities have been negligent about preventive measures that it has broken out afresh. Even before Sir Ronald Ross's discovery, Dr. Young was coming to the conclusion that the mosquito was the cause of malaria, so that in his early years at Sheikh Othman he did his best to have stagnant pools drained, and since then he has exerted himself to keep the authorities up to the mark in the battle with the mosquito. The Aden Settlement is now one of the healthiest stations in the East, the death-rate among Europeans being only 7.2 per thousand, and some of these are people who have been brought ashore from passing ships in a dying condition.

The compound between the two villages of Sheikh Othman contains the school building, a large bungalow for the nurses, several outhouses for servants and for patients who bring their families with them, and a hospital with two upper storeys. The hospital staff consists of two European doctors, two European nurses, and some Arab assistants.

During the period of the war work came to a standstill, for the Turks came down from Yemen and invaded Sheikh Othman, which they captured and held for a fortnight. The buildings were not injured, but some of the things belonging to the mission were stolen or damaged. Dr. Young was particularly unfortunate, for most of his furniture was broken, a number of valuable possessions were stolen, and some of his books, which were of no value to the raiders, were maliciously damaged.

When the Turks were expelled from Sheikh Othman, our troops occupied the village and remained there after the war. The nurses' bungalow was used as Brigade

Headquarters, the hospital was turned into a military hospital, and the other two missionaries' bungalows were used for officers' quarters, one of them doing duty also as a club.

In the beginning of 1921 the medical work of the mission was restarted, and since then it has been carried on energetically, the large numbers of people who visit the hospital showing that the help which they receive there is greatly appreciated. They come to the hospital from Aden, Sheikh Othman, the surrounding villages, and from places far distant. They are of different races, and of many tribes ; the Somali, the Indian, the Parsi, the Jew, mingle with the Aden Arab, the Arab of Yemen, or even at times the Arab of Muscat or of Mecca, as they come to the hospital for treatment. Some days the doctor may have more than a hundred new cases to deal with, besides people who come back for treatment, in-patients who occupy the wards in the upper storeys of the hospital or the outhouses in the

compound, and those who call him in to see them in their homes. Many are the operations which are performed, of which stone and hernia cases are the most common. The number of those who come with eye troubles is legion. One of the most recent developments is the treatment of lepers, who live in a hut removed from the others. 'The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear . . . to the poor the Gospel is preached.'

Religious teaching goes hand-in-hand with the other activities of the mission. The school begins every morning with a Bible lesson: the out-patients and those of the in-patients who are able to move are gathered together for a short service before the doctor sees them. The congregation at these services is composed of people of different religions and different stages of intelligence, many of whom are suffering from loathsome diseases. As they sit in the verandah of the hospital they listen to the story of Him who could

heal all diseases, who said : ' Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'

After the service, while the patients are waiting to see the doctor, Scripture portions are exhibited for sale among them at the very nominal prices which the British and Foreign Bible Society charge for those books which they produce. Most of the people cannot read, and yet a surprising number of portions are sold, for occasionally men who cannot read themselves have sons who can, so they buy a book. Scriptures have been sold in Arabic, Hebrew, Arabic in Hebrew characters, Gujarati, Urdu and English, and some of them have been carried far inland. Arabic Scriptures have been bought by men from Mecca, Muscat and many parts of Yemen ; two local Sultans have bought complete Bibles ; and Jews from Yemen have taken New Testament portions into the interior. One day a young Jew spent all the money he had with him on New Testament portions in Hebrew, with the intention of taking them back to his village in Yemen and

selling them there at a profit. No objection was made to this : it was a method of getting the Gospel into a district where the missionary is not allowed to go. Sometimes Scriptures have been sold in the streets of Sheikh Othman with success, but this is not a regular practice, as the necessary time (and energy) are not always available. One of the most useful sides of this work is that it frequently gives one an opportunity of speaking to individuals about religious matters, a very valuable form of service.

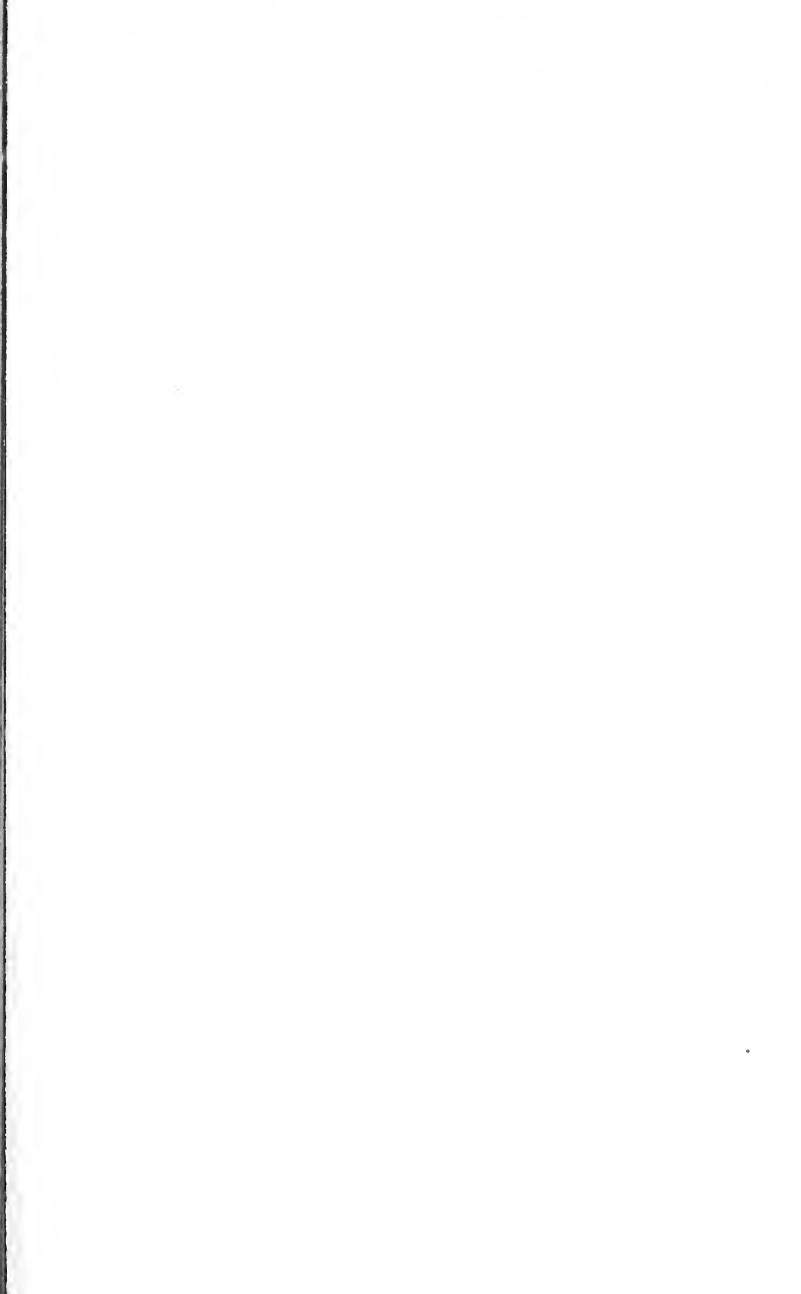
During the years since the mission was started there have been very few converts, but there have been some. Work among Muslims is very hard, because they are satisfied with their religion and hold that it is superior to ours ; but the work goes on, and the endeavour is made to win the people for Christ.

All this work is directly due to the self-sacrificing labour of Ion Keith-Falconer, who is still remembered by some of the older people, who when they were boys

were accustomed to receive sweets from him. His name is commemorated in the title of the mission, which is called the 'Keith-Falconer Mission,' and in that of the United Free Church at Steamer Point called the 'Keith-Falconer Memorial Church.' Yet there is no better way in which his name could be commemorated than by a strenuous endeavour to win the people of South Arabia for whom he gave his life.

'One happy day, Mohammad's Crescent will yield and disappear before Christ's Cross; and, when this day dawns, the young scholar, whose torch seemed to be stifled and extinguished far too speedily among the Arabian sands, will be counted among those who have brought about the glad consummation.

'And there is not one of us to whom the joyousness of his Christianity should not be a pattern and an inspiration.'





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